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The Labour M.P. George N. Barnes and the Creation of the International Labour Office in 1919 International Labour Office in 1919

Korbet, Rebecca Bronwyn

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The Labour M.P. George N. Barnes and the Creation of the International Labour Office in 1919



Rebecca Korbet
King's College, London

**A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the Institute of
Contemporary British History for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

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Cover image: The Commission on International Labour Legislation, Paris, 1919, George N. Barnes (highlighted: front row, third from right) third from right, Samuel Gompers (front row, centre) and Emile Vandervelde (front row, extreme left).

Source: ILO Archives, Geneva.

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Abstract

This thesis examines the role of the Labour MP George N. Barnes (1859-1940) in the establishment of the International Labour Organisation in 1919. It focusses primarily on the creation of the Labour Convention (Chapter XIII, the ‘Labour Chapter’ in the Treaty of Versailles) and its adoption by the Peace Conference. It has been recorded that Barnes considered this his proudest achievement; however Labour Party historiography has not adequately taken account of his valuable contribution to the advance of social and economic justice for the world’s workers. By examining the challenges Barnes faced in his dual role as representative of British organised labour and plenipotentiary with the British Empire Delegation, the argument is made that he was particularly well suited to successfully steer the Convention through to its adoption. An understanding will be gained of the role that Barnes played as an international diplomat and spokesman for organised labour in the Peace Conference setting, and how he channelled contemporary ideas about labour’s place in the post-war world through his approach to policy. It is further argued through examination of his background, beliefs and political ideology that Barnes was an important figure of whom historians of the early Labour Party should take more account. This project aims to provide fresh insight into George N. Barnes as a trade unionist and politician and ascertain how his work in Paris helped Britain’s ‘socialist’ Labour Party achieve an image of respectability years before forming its first Government in 1924.

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I would also like to thank the patient staff at the National Archives and the British Library for their assistance in navigating their tremendous catalogues of material, and also the staff at the Parliamentary Archives, London Metropolitan University, and the Maughan and Senate House Libraries in London. I am deeply grateful to Jacques Rodriguez and the staff at the ILO Archive in Geneva for their help and hospitality. In New York, the archivists and staff at Columbia's Butler Library and

the New York Public Library provided me with a quiet haven to work in as well as access to their rare materials collections.

This project is the result of nearly six years' work. During that time life gave no quarter and it sometimes appeared as though this thesis would remain a collection of half-completed chapters and thousands of pages of random notes and developing ideas. I must thank my family, Deanna Gemmill and Jonathan Strauss, for their constant encouragement during stressful times, and Milton Strauss, Ph.D, for reassuring me that self-doubt and 'imposter syndrome' are normal and persistent parts of academic life. Very special thanks go to my former KCL / ICBH MA colleagues and dear friends Samantha Martin, Tiffany Beebe and Sandra Keen whom have remained sources of inspiration. Finally, I could not have completed this thesis without the love and support of my friends, my extended family: Dr Mary C. Greenfield, Jack Rabid, Eric Keil, Robert Weeks, Barbara Taylor, Carolyn Worman, Ulrika Froberg, Phil Dyson, Donna Henry, Simon Billenness, Ann Corbett, Christine von Royce, Donna Argentina, Laura Zeitlin, Jesse Malin, Cid Scantlebury, and Daisy Jean Undercuffler.

Commonly used abbreviations:

AEU	Amalgamated Engineering Union
AFL	American Federation of Labor
BED	British Empire Delegation
COL	Columbia University (Rare Book and Manuscript Library)
DLG	David Lloyd George
GNB	George N. Barnes
HCPs	High Contracting Parties
ILO	International Labour Office
LON	League of Nations
LSE	British Library of Political and Economic Science, London School of Economics
MOL	(British) Ministry of Labour
PHM	People's History Museum (Labour Party Archive)
TNA	The National Archives, London
TPA	The Parliamentary Archive
TUC	Trades Union Congress

Introduction

In the spring of 1919, George N. Barnes steered the Labour Convention for the International Labour Organisation through thirty-six sittings of the international Labour Commission, securing its adoption by the plenary Peace Conference for insertion into the Peace Treaty. Labour Party histories have often considered this his proudest achievement, but no monograph exists in relation to his diplomatic work at Versailles. Although the trade unionist Barnes was instrumental in the Labour Party's creation, relatively little is known him about and the historiography tends to focus on his stint as Labour member of the David Lloyd George Coalition, 1917-1920, unfairly characterising him as 'right-wing' for his support of the war and separation from the Party in 1918. The thesis questions why Barnes as a figure for Labour Party study has been overlooked despite his long career in trade unionism and public life.

This study undertakes exploration of Barnes' role in the International Labour Organisation's creation, examining how he influenced the British plan for reorganising industrial relations after the first world war. One of the first twenty-nine Labour Party members to enter Parliament in 1906, Barnes became a plenipotentiary with the British Empire Delegation in 1919, leading the British delegation to the International Labour Commission during the Peace Conference. Was Barnes' work during in Paris instrumental in the acceptance of moderate socialism by international institutions, and if so, to what extent? The thesis argues that Barnes was a key figure in Labour Party history during an important phase in the development of international relations. Did his prominence on the world stage affect the Labour Party's appearance of fitness to govern? How did a politician who started out as a trade unionist and socialist in the nineteenth-century adapt to the language and practice of the 'new internationalism' by

the war's end? What particular strain of socialism did Barnes identify with, and what made his approach distinctive? How did his national policy ideas translate to the international sphere? Answering these and other questions will contribute to greater understanding of an important Labour Party figure, and a key phase in the evolution of its ideas.

The starting point for this thesis was the hypothesis that Barnes has been overlooked or underestimated in many Labour Party histories. During study as an undergraduate and Master's Degree student of British politics and history with emphasis on the Labour Party, it was observed that the name 'George Barnes' peppered the literature but little was said about him. On those occasions that his work with the ILO was mentioned, little emphasis or detail was offered. The primary focus in the historiography seemed to be on his 1896-1908 leadership of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers ('ASE'), his portrayal as an ineffectual Party chairman, 1910-11, or his wartime and post-war affiliation with David Lloyd George. Why did Barnes elect to stay in the Coalition Government when the Labour Party he helped to create left it in 1918? For this, Barnes has sometimes been depicted as a 'class collaborator' who betrayed the Independent Labour Party's pacifist-socialist ethos, but no one has studied in-depth the political ideology and the philosophical underpinnings of this interesting British socialist, someone that went from being one of the ILP's founders to become an international diplomat. George N. Barnes bridged the ideological gap between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, witnessing important changes to the organised labour movement throughout his life.

Barnes' personal papers were lost during the Blitz in 1940, and the full-length, handwritten English minutes of the Labour Commission sittings were intentionally

destroyed after the Peace Conference. Research for this project has also shown that the civil service had a hand in taking some of Barnes' Paris papers from circulation in the early nineteen-thirties. He may therefore have been overlooked as a figure for study owing to the outward appearance of a lack of raw source material. Curiosity and perseverance, however, led to a wealth of information about Barnes, so much in fact that it is wholly feasible to produce a full biography. It is hoped that this work will inspire further discussion and research into some of the more elusive early Labour Party members and aspects of the Party's history which have not been fully explored, particularly during the years leading up to the formation of their first Government in 1924.

Barnes: from domestic to international politician

Another area to contemplate regarding Barnes' ideological and political trajectory is the effect and causes of 'the international turn' in the context of his own socio-political awakening, and how his policies may have been shaped as a result. Glenda Sluga's *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism*¹ and *Nation, Psychology, and International Politics, 1870-1919*² provided excellent and interesting insights for this discussion and are deserving of more coverage than space allows. Barnes was already a political figure during the 'apogee of Empire'³ when nationalism was at its peak, ultimately leading to mass militarisation and total war. In Barnes' case, his involvement with the ILO's inception was arguably one way for him to personally repair his legacy as a voice for the working classes, given some of his unfortunate turns in domestic British politics, which are discussed below. Nationalism and

¹ US: 2013, University of Pennsylvania Press) 'Sluga *Internationalism*' from here)

² UK: 2006 Palgrave Macmillan ('Sluga *Psychology*' from here)

³ Sluga, *Internationalism*, p.11

internationalism, conceptually and linguistically, were often in conflict and competition with each other, until a 'new' internationalism became increasingly representative of modernity and progress during the 1890s in particular. This phenomenon is evident from parsing man of Barnes' speeches and recollections; his British pride is unmistakeable as he simultaneously champions the benefits of all nations and people embracing a globalised mindset. While he shared many of the aims of the First and Second International, particularly through the notion of greater workers' solidarity, his language retained a national and moral character that set it aside somewhat from the class-based ethos of them.

The transition from the 'national' to the 'international' that pre-dated the war ran on several tracks: there was a global ideological consensus developing, symptomatic of growing world sentiment about the ethical relationship between the State and an expanding mass representation/broadening democracy from a working class perspective, and of a civilised, 'international society' from the middle-class/liberal elite aspect. Technological advances were the confirming 'facts' about internationalism: electricity, news and mail services, telegrams and wireless communications, along with railways, canals, ocean vessels, were breaking down borders, creating opportunities for social and economic advance: Barnes often referred to similar 'facts' of man's social, scientific and philosophical evolution. As an engineer and a Communitarian Christian socialist, Barnes also held such advances as confirmation of mankind's natural yearning for mutual, benevolent cooperation. He was in agreement with many others who contemplated a greater international *mentalité*, and potential for peace through this global interconnectedness at the time. Members of the liberal elite such as Nicholas Murray Butler, Columbia University's President, made this the case for international

law. Harold Butler (Barnes' close companion in the Labour Ministry and co-worker on the 'British scheme' as it came to be known) described it as "the habit of thinking of foreign relations and business in such a way as to inspire friendly and cooperative relations."⁴ Barnes' allegiance to Christian communitarian socialism during the progressive era of social reform in London's poorest communities mirrored wider, universally held sentiments that drew so many of the socially excluded to the international movement. First-wave feminists, as Sluga pointed out, were compelled by the international because they were denied the legal and political rights that men could enjoy. Racial matters also became increasingly extra-national during this period (despite lasting national prejudices which were often argued through economic concerns, as minutes of the British Empire Delegation discussed in Chapter 5 disclose).⁵ Sluga's far-ranging work clearly indicated how numerous, widespread and lingering contemporary ideas about identity, power and place overlapped and transcended the national sphere into the international – and back again - as the nineteenth century verged onto the twentieth as Barnes' political awakening also dawned.

The thesis also examines how Lloyd George's selection of Barnes to lead the British labour delegation to Paris presented the potential for him to re-establish himself as a champion of workers' interests on the international stage after years of tumult on the domestic front. Considering some of the turbulence and disappointment Barnes faced through 1918, the appeal of the potential Paris appointment takes on greater significance. The following chapters examine how Barnes brought his ideas about domestic industrial policy to the world stage as he also evolved personally, a move which arguably fulfilled his vision for 'home rule to industry' with the tremendous

⁴ Sluga *Internationalism*, p.31 (fn)

⁵ Ibid, p.26

bonus of restoring his reputation as a fighter for working class interests in the world stage.

As the Labour Commission took shape, the lines between the national and the international, and between industrial matters and matters of high diplomacy, were frequently overlapping and often blurred. At the time, all of the delegations to the Peace Conference were dealing with this phenomenon in their own way, making up new rules for the ‘new’ internationalism while yet upholding ages-old tenets of pre-war ‘national’ ideas and practice at the same time. Barnes synthesised his role as a spokesperson for labour and his Government as he promoted the British labour scheme, promoting British primacy on the world stage while to large extent re-inventing himself as an international figure in the process.

A number of Labour Party personalities followed a similar trajectory. They experienced struggles domestically, often at times with the labour forces they were meant to represent, and at others with their own leadership, very much as Barnes did. Perhaps most conspicuously one might consider Barnes’ contemporary Arthur Henderson.⁶ Henderson was at continual odds with Ramsay MacDonald whether Labour was in power or opposition, yet he was consistently involved in guiding the Party’s direction, its policies and its expansion as a mass party before and during the war. He was chairman of the Parliamentary Labour Party (1908–10, 1914–17), president of the Board of Education (1915–16), and in the first Coalition Government was Paymaster General (1916), and member of the war cabinet (1916–17). Henderson was also the central author of Labour’s 1918 manifesto, *Labour and the New Social*

⁶ Arthur Henderson, PC (1863-1935) First Labour cabinet minister, Labour Party leader three times; PLP chairman, 1908; President of the Iron Founders’ c. 1910; Party treasurer from 1912; Chairman of the National Advisory Committee, 1915; Foreign Secretary c. 1929; see appendices.

Order, which contained the famous line ‘by hand or by brain’ that came to define the Party as that of the working classes, and also the middle classes – ‘by brain’.⁷ However Henderson came under fire for not supporting domestic labour forces at certain times as Home Secretary during the first Labour Government (1924), much as Barnes had throughout his domestic career. Although not a labour minister, Henderson was always involved in industrial relations while Home Secretary, and was castigated for not being unsympathetic to striking policeman who had essentially ‘downed tools’ by refusing to provide their service to the community (Barnes often held a similar opinion about strikers, particularly when they defied decisions regarding settlements), asserting that he could do little aside from opening a minority-led special inquiry. Henderson’s public remarks also drew ire from the Clydesiders - a parallel and recurring theme during Barnes’ early political career - and he was eventually forced to climb down from his position.⁸ The desire to act like a ‘national’ and not a ‘class’-based Government is attributed as a major reason for Henderson (as well as Clynes and Shaw) supporting the Whitehall view on a number of issues relating to labour and unemployment bills.⁹ Wrigley emphasised how links between the TUC and the Ministry of Labour weakened throughout 1924, and how Henderson’s support for invocation of the Emergency Powers Act, et al., made it difficult for the Labour Party in opposition to criticise the Baldwin Government’s tactics during the General Strike of 1926.¹⁰

The Labour Party under MacDonald viewed foreign policy as the key to restoring Britain’s economic prosperity, and as the focus on better relations with Russia

⁷ The Labour Party, *Labour and the New Social Order: a report on reconstruction* (London: 1918 Labour Party Press), pp.4-5; see also Rt. Hon. A. Henderson, *The Aims of Labour* (as above, 1919), et al.

⁸ Chris Wrigley, *Arthur Henderson* (Cardiff:1990 GPC Books) (‘Wrigley’ from here), pp.144-6

⁹ Wrigley, p.147

¹⁰ Ibid, p.148

became the priority, it was natural for Henderson, who had been a key figure in the Second International, to become Foreign Secretary. From 1929 Henderson, an avid supporter the League of Nations, also worked to moderate Franco-German problems during that second Labour government. Yet Henderson proved to be a weak leader of the Labour Party after 1931 when the critical financial crises dealt a death blow to MacDonald's second government and caused the failure of the National Government he headed. From 1932 until his death Henderson was president of the World Disarmament Conference, and he was awarded the 1934 Nobel Peace Prize. It bears mentioning that Barnes also had his problems with MacDonald, but before Labour came to power in 1924 his 'divorce' from the Labour Party in 1918, not to mention his strong alignment with Lloyd George, protected him from Labour's internecine and extra-parliamentary turbulence (these phenomena are discussed more completely in the chapters that follow). After the war, Henderson arguably found greater 'success' in the international sphere than the domestic much as Barnes had done, although this is not to discount either man's tremendous service to the Labour Party during its formative years overall.¹¹

A combination of experience, opportunity and ideological beliefs in response to contemporary political and social circumstances combined to underlie the 'national to international (and sometimes back again)' shift(s) that Barnes underwent along with other Labour Party members: much the same was true of Ramsay MacDonald. It is important to note that while Barnes was unique in many ways, he was not alone and he stood at the convergence of multiple threads of 'international' thinking before as well as after the war. His transition from domestic to world politician was buoyed by these

¹¹ One may also wish to consider the cases of Roy Jenkins and David Miliband, Labour Party members who, many years later, also shifted from the domestic to the international realms, albeit under vastly different circumstances.

philosophical observations, along with his belief in benign, beneficent state structures and effective administrative processes, as examination of his time serving on the Labour Commission demonstrates in the chapters that follow.

The thesis' chronology begins with an investigation of Barnes' early life and the influences upon his introduction to trade unionism, socialism, and political activity centred on industrial relations and progressive social reform. He later adjusted to the role of international diplomat easily, and is featured in a number of paintings depicting the Treaty's signing in Versailles's Hall of Mirrors; he appears relatively casual, leaning on a plinth in Sir James Guthrie's *Statesmen of World War I* (1924-30).¹² During research for this project in Geneva, the unlabelled portrait of Barnes by Murray Urquhart was unexpectedly discovered during a walk through the ILO building.¹³ Yet Barnes remained humble, writing 'I have been able to do things by my being in the right place at the right time. After all, there is an element of luck in life and I have been lucky.'¹⁴ Instead of writing a memoir about his Peace Conference experience or keeping a daily journal as was conventional, he chose instead to speak publicly on the work of the ILO after he retired. While this is an example of his preference for live, practical exposition, it also represents another reason for a dearth of literature about his Peace Treaty accomplishments.

Barnes' work with the British Empire Delegation was intrinsically tied to his Labour Commission role, and a hefty tome from Barnes in the vein of those of David

¹² Sir James Guthrie (1859-1930), *Statesmen of World War I* hangs in London's National Portrait Gallery; also see John Christen Johansen (1876-1964), *Signing of the Treaty of Versailles* (1919), and William Orpen (1878-1931) *The Signing of Peace in the Hall of Mirrors, Versailles, 28 June 1919* (1919). Orpen also painted a portrait, *The Right Honourable G. N. Barnes*, PC (1919).

¹³ The painting's plaque was missing; ILO Archive staff were unable to locate it. Murray Urquhart (1880-1972), *The Rt Hon. G. N. Barnes* (year unknown).

¹⁴ George N. Barnes, *From Workshop to War Cabinet* (henceforth *FWWC*) (London: 1923 Herbert Jenkins Ltd)

Hunter Miller's or David Lloyd George's might have provided tremendous insights on a range of Peace Conference themes from his unique perspective. One can not ponder too heavily on what might have been. Late in life Barnes wrote about the ILO, his time on the Labour Commission, and the Labour Charter in an interesting series of editorials for the AEU monthly journal, not long before he fell into a coma.¹⁵ The columns were informative and entertaining, capturing well Barnes' casual eloquence. According to his final May 1938 column he was preparing another piece on the ILO since 1919, but found it was beyond him, writing 'I find it is beyond me. I must leave it to younger men to carry the story on...'¹⁶

Barnes never strayed far from his roots in Christian communitarian socialism during his work to advance worker's reform, and this ethos coloured his policy decisions before, during and after the war. Chapter one depicts a class-free political ideology that could be described as 'One Nation Labour.' In his 1923 memoir, he gave advice to the Labour Party with a nod to the historical materialism of Marx, a man he greatly admired. The Party's rise as a political entity, he wrote, proved that 'the economic theories of the last century have been discarded as socially, as well as morally, and even economically, wrong, and the thinkers of all classes are agreed that the highest possible standard of living for the mass of the people is the ideal to be aimed at by the makers and administrators of laws.'¹⁷ However he also criticised the party under MacDonald for being stuck in its own past, too reliant on slogans and propaganda, and in danger of being overtaken by self-interested, extremist individuals in the trade unions especially. Some months before the formation of its first

¹⁵ Barnes, 'The I.L.O.', April 1938, and 'The Labour Charter', May 1938, *A.E.U. Monthly Journal*

¹⁶ Ibid, 'The Labour Charter', p.193

¹⁷ Barnes, *FWWC*, p.301; referring to rampant industrialisation and unchecked, laissez-faire capitalism.

Government, Barnes presciently warned them to quickly modernise to meet the challenges ahead:

I have seen freedom broadening down to the class in which I was born and bred and which I have tried to serve... a danger, at the moment, as it seems to me, is in Labour allowing itself to be politically over-ridden and misrepresented by ill-balanced persons from outside its ranks...¹⁸

The weakness of the Labour Party is not that it lacks the ability to govern, but that it has not yet adjusted itself to changed conditions...¹⁹

Barnes had mixed emotions when writing about his former colleagues four years after leaving them. However he was hopeful about Labour's future, and his eternal emphasis on 'practical' politics was explicit in the memoir's closing lines: 'I believe that it will yet settle down to practical business on the basis of actual facts in the world which we live, and use its political power to steer the cause of Labour into the main stream of the Nation's life. That is its mission.'²⁰

The thesis begins with a discussion of the primary sources and archives that have been drawn on for this project, including the missing 'Barnes papers' that directly informed it and provided inspiration for future research. Chapter one explores important biographical aspects of Barnes' life and career prior to the Peace Conference and the Labour Commission's formation, making the argument that although his 'awakening' came in the nineteenth century he ably bridged the transition to the twentieth, retaining his core ethical and socialistic beliefs and applying them to find solutions to modern problems. It is important to recognise that inaccurate analysis of Barnes' political ideology has led to a substantial failure of understanding, depriving the literature of an

¹⁸ Barnes, *FWWC*, p 295; Stanley Baldwin fought the general election of December 1923 on the doomed platform of tariff reform, and with explicit Liberal support Labour formed its first minority Government in January 1924, lasting a mere ten months.

¹⁹ Ibid, p.301

²⁰ Ibid.

early Labour Party figure who was integral to the development of their ideas, something this thesis aims to address. It must be stated that while a seeming lack of sources available to researchers in Britain may have contributed to inadequate information about Barnes and his ILO work, there is a great deal of information to be gleaned from a wide variety of sources and a number of repositories in Britain as well as in Switzerland and the United States.²¹

The thesis's chronology begins in chapter two with an examination of how he worked as a member of the War Cabinet, and how he attempted to influence the Government to declare its labour policy before the announcement of the Peace Conference, discussing how he used both official and unofficial channels to that end. What was his involvement with the earliest drafts of the British ILO scheme in London, and what challenges did he face upon arriving in Paris? This is determined through examination of how he utilised the people and resources at his disposal during the chaotic preliminary Peace Conference period. Another important question chapter two asks is how and to what extent was Barnes able to include British organised labour's input for the scheme, and what forces ultimately determined whether he succeeded or failed in that mission. Chapter three then introduces new conflicts and challenges for Barnes to navigate with the formation of the International Labour Commission ('Labour Commission' or 'Commission'), emphasising how the complications that came through the appointment of the head of the American Federation of Labour ('AFL') as its President affected his role.

²¹ Apart from the Columbia University's special collections as discussed, the New York Public Library network proved a surprising source for a number of rare books, records and microfilm thought exclusive to British archives. A full discussion of archives follows.

Chapters four and five further examine how Barnes handled the problems involved in designing a ‘treaty’ for world labour that impinged upon long-standing ideas about national sovereignty, democracy and constitutionality. These chapters also prompt questions about how quickly the world was changing right after the war, and whether the Peace Conference’s attention to industrial relations and working-class welfare signified a true paradigm shift, or merely represented a continuation of a process already underway. Along those lines, the thesis also asks how women fared in the short- and longer-term from the Labour Convention’s creation, considering how Barnes managed their requests for inclusion in the process. Some of the most salient phases of Barnes’ involvement with the Labour Convention came after its final drafting and the Labour Commission having officially disbanded, so chapter five examines how Barnes prevented its detractors from boycotting it or losing it in the vast shuffle of Paris committee papers. A final epilogue chapter touches upon several aspects of Barnes’ ILO-relevant work that may exceed this particular project’s remit yet still support the general argument that he has been discounted in the historiography. Then, a summary of this thesis’ findings and final conclusions follows. The study ultimately illustrates how Barnes advanced working class demands for raised industrial standards in his way, and that for this reason there is potential for further research into the life and work of this progenitor of the Labour Party as it is known today.

The draft Labour Convention for the International Labour Organisation became Chapter XIII of the Treaty of Versailles on June 28, 1919 comprising Articles 387 through 427. Article 427 comprises the nine points (or clauses) of the ‘Labour Charter’ as it has been commonly described. For reference, Chapter XIII is reproduced in the appendices, along with one of the earliest versions of the British draft for the ILO

Convention. The Labour Charter's original nineteen points is also reproduced, juxtaposed against the 'Balfour redraft' for comparison. Chapter XIII was not the only section of the Treaty dealing with labour matters, therefore Article 312 of Chapter X, Section VIII, pertaining to social and State insurance in ceded territory is also included in the appendices.

Primary sources: The Mystery of the ‘Barnes Papers’ and Shotwell’s *Origins of the International Labor Organization*

As stated, Barnes has remained an under-researched British Labour Party figure, partially owing to his personal archive being lost in 1940 when his Brixton home was destroyed. A small amount of personal memorabilia that has survived is held at the LSE Archive in London, donated by a descendent several decades after his death.¹ There is still a good deal of information about both his personal life and parliamentary and extra-parliamentary work to be gleaned, albeit fragmentary and scattered. The absence of a complete Barnes archive provoked some sleuthing which revealed unexpected sources providing further evidence that much about his political record remains undocumented. This included comparative research of British, American and Swiss resources which provided further evidence of Barnes’ prominence in the early development of the ILO.

Barnes was mentioned throughout James T. Shotwell’s all-encompassing two-volume work *Origins of the International Labor Organization* (1934: ‘Origins’), which provided inspiration for further research.² It has been recorded by Shotwell that the British delegation’s original stenographic minutes and hand-written notes of the Labour Commission were destroyed shortly after the Peace Conference.³ During an interview in 1930, Barnes’ personal secretary G.M. Hodgson attested to burning the bulk of his Paris papers ‘to avoid leakage’ before returning the rest to the War Cabinet.^{4,5} Volume II (‘Documents’) of *Origins* faithfully reproduced the official British record of the

¹ LSE COLL MISC 1037, donated in 2000 by the grand-daughter of Agnes Barnes, a first cousin of Barnes’ wife Jessie, via Dundee City Council Arts and Heritage Department.

² James T Shotwell, (1874-1965), *Origins of the International Labor Organization (in two volumes)* (henceforth *Origins*) (New York: 1934 Columbia University Press)

³ *Origins*, vol II, p.149

⁴ GM Hodgson (n/a), little is known about him

⁵ COL 104, CR to JTS, 3.11.30

thirty-four Labour Commission sittings held at the National Archive in London which are yet bound with a number of peripheral documents that were not, or could not, be published in 1934. Barnes was interviewed a number of times during the preparation of *Origins*, and he was keen to give a full and frank account of the work underpinning the birth of the ILO as correspondence in Shotwell's personal archive at Columbia University showed. A further search for documents concerning Barnes at the ILO Archive in Geneva, the official repository for Shotwell's *Origins* papers, revealed a great deal of material relevant to Barnes and the ILO. The Shotwell material retains a great deal of insider commentary and other material that *Origins* did not (or could not) make use of, and this thesis is by no means an exhaustive study of their valuable content.

Shotwell copied hundreds of original documents between 1930 and 1934 before returning them to their owners or national governments. Both collections include interview notes with Paris witnesses that are largely unpublished, and, although copies, preserve the records of certain transactions for which official records are not available (e.g., some British delegation material). Emile Vandervelde, head of the Belgian labour delegation,⁶ claimed he kept no Peace Conference dossier himself (owing to his loathing of secretarial work), but an interview record kept in Geneva revealed that he personally considered Barnes to be the most important person on the Commission.⁷ Indexes of the Geneva collection referred to several folders of 'Barnes Papers' which were absent upon arrival. Copies of some of these were found in New York: Barnes' continuing correspondence with British Trade Union representatives after the Commission concluded its Report (while it was still 'Peace Conference Confidential')

⁶ Emile Vandervelde (1866-1938), Belgian socialist, politician and labour commission delegate, see appendices.

⁷ ILO 'Miscellaneous', a number of documents at the back of the main Geneva index (folder).

were discovered amongst the Columbia University (COL) papers.⁸ A good deal of material concerning Barnes in both Shotwell archives exceeds the scope of this thesis, including Germany's admission to the first Washington Conference, with which he was heavily involved.⁹

The notes of Carol Riegelman (Lubin),¹⁰ Shotwell's research assistant, revealed a great deal of unexpected information. Barnes loaned Riegelman many documents which were shuttled between Geneva, Paris and New York before their return to London. He was keen to help his friend Shotwell write about the formation of the ILO. Riegelman's eighteen-page index of material concerning Barnes included War Cabinet, Ministry of Labour and Labour Party papers, including texts of speeches and personal correspondence covering a wide range of topics spanning his post-1916 career.¹¹ The elderly Barnes may have forgotten (or did not know) that Hodgson had destroyed his papers when he sent Riegelman to visit him at the Ministry of Labour in 1930.¹² At first Barnes did not recall having any remaining Paris documents, but Riegelman reported to Shotwell that he suddenly recalled two red boxes that had remained unexamined since he left the Peace Conference, even when writing his memoirs¹³

⁸ Nos. 45-49 are Barnes-related; folders 32 through 65 on assorted Labour Commission problems are missing; it is suspected some material ended up re-classified at Columbia, whose filing system is inconsistent with the ILO's; the Columbia collection is overdue for reclassification. Columbia's box 105 was discovered to hold copies of ILO file 47. Neither the Arthur Henderson or C W Bowerman papers at PHM revealed Barnes correspondence, save pre-1918 Labour Party documents.

⁹ These and other documents concerning the creation of ILO Governing Body and the Organising Committee's formation are discussed in the epilogue.

¹⁰ Carol Riegelman (Lubin) (1909-2005), researcher, editorial assistant, and secretary to James T Shotwell, see appendices.

¹¹ Ranging from coal supply, housing, wages, strikes, shipbuilding, battle situations, the League of Nations, Russia, reconstruction, Henderson and his cabinet position, Irish home rule, Labour Party policy pre-December 1918, women's representation at the Washington Conference and 'miscellaneous unimportant information', et al - Riegelman's index is in COL 105

¹² COL 104, CR to JTS, 3.11.30

¹³ COL 104 'Int'l Labour Office Material', unsorted.

Barnes allowed her to take what she wanted to copy, hoping their content would be published ‘without too much discretion.’ He believed he would be able to obtain copies of the Minutes of the British Empire Delegation debates, and of Lloyd George’s ‘Garden Suburb’ records of War Cabinet discussions of labour matters. Barnes also felt he could coerce Sir Malcolm (Delevingne¹⁴) into being more open about the British Empire Delegation material he held very secretly.¹⁵ Sir Malcolm, she wrote, had ‘a very complete correspondence’ with Barnes, who gave detailed testimony about the Nine Points, Germany’s admission to the Washington Conference and ‘the trouble with the Dominions’ over Articles VII and XXXV.¹⁶ Reigelman told Shotwell that the vast amount of material to which Barnes gave her access would make their book unmanageably large, but it was ‘too good historical material to let go by!’¹⁷

Sir Maurice Hankey, head of the Civil Service,¹⁸ learned of Shotwell’s publication-in-progress and was fearful about its disclosures. In July 1931, Shotwell planned a trip to visit Barnes on holiday in Margate to discuss ‘the problem of the documentation of the record of the work in which you had so great a share at the Peace Conference’,¹⁹ but he was called away to the Committee on Intellectual Cooperation conference in Geneva. Barnes nevertheless loaned another tranche of papers to Riegelman by early October.²⁰ On October 20, however, he asked for all his material to be returned and not taken to New York after receiving a letter from Hankey requesting

¹⁴ Sir Malcolm Delevingne (1868-1950), British labour delegation, Home Office civil servant, see appendices.

¹⁵ See appendices for full list of British Labour Commission members.

¹⁶ COL 104, CR to JTS, 3.11.30

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ (Sir) Maurice Pascal Alers Hankey (1877-1963), civil servant, secretary to the War Cabinet, see appendices.

¹⁹ COL 105, JTS to GNB, 14.7.31

²⁰ COL 105, CR to GNB, 8.10.31

a meeting.²¹ Barnes had retired from public life since 1922, hence whatever Hankey wrote must have been very persuasive since politically Barnes had nothing to lose. Unfortunately the letter has not been found. Reigelman apparently suggested that Harold Butler²² should speak to Hankey to try to sway him, but Shotwell replied: -

...With reference to the Barnes' correspondence, it is what I feared from the start. Hankey has certainly scared Barnes about our possible use of the documents, and there is no alternative at all open to us but to turn back any and everything that Barnes wants. Your letter to him was a good one, and you have handled the whole situation absolutely correctly. I should not have Butler see Hankey though, for I don't think Hankey would be moved from his point of view by any such interview.²³

Regardless, Shotwell seemingly retained some of Barnes' papers in Geneva until 1933, as a January letter from Barnes to Butler showed wherein he requested their return due to not knowing how to reach Reigelman.²⁴ It appears that Barnes may have returned much of his material to the Civil Service, from where some records might have found their way to The National Archive and Parliamentary Archives, while others might have been intentionally destroyed, due to their assumed sensitivity. The Shotwell notes may provide the only clues to their content. As nationalism and fascism advanced on the continent in 1933, Sir Malcolm wrote to Shotwell that he was consulting the Foreign Office and Home Office about the publication of the official documents he held.²⁵ In January 1934, Sir Malcolm informed Shotwell that British opinion was highly averse to the publication of, or even reference to, Departmental memoranda or notes of internal proceedings; the Prime Minister, Stanley Baldwin, had recently

²¹ COL 105, GNB to CR, 20.10.31

²² Sir Harold Beresford Butler (1883-1951), British labour commission, civil servant with the Ministry of Labour, see appendices.

²³ COL 105, JTS to CR, 30.10.31

²⁴ ILO XR 25/31 'G N Barnes' file in Harold Butler papers

²⁵ COL 10, MD to JTS, 17.11.33; the full British record of the Labour Commission sittings became a Document in Volume II (Document 34) instead of an appendix as originally considered.

expressed that sentiment in a public speech and he was in full agreement.²⁶ On February 6 he informed Shotwell that the British civil service would not allow the publication of Departmental Minutes and Memoranda.²⁷ A February 28 telegram from Phelan to Shotwell read ‘...considered reference delegation minutes in footnote very dangerous and better omitted.’²⁸ This suggests that many of Barnes’ documents were probably culled by the Foreign Office and/or Hankey years before Barnes’ home in South London was destroyed.

Other primary sources

A typed copy of the American stenographic record of the Labour Commission sittings, chronicled by Guy Oyster’s secretary, John T. Graves,²⁹ was an unexpected find in the Columbia Shotwell collection.³⁰ It delineated the Americans’ differing perception of the British draft, giving emphasis to specific arguments in ways the British record did not. A concluding note by Graves made a point of summarising Gompers’ guiding principle that the labour movement must remain independent from governmental influence or interference. Graves assessed that although Barnes had to defend the ‘Socialistic idea’ his European supporters championed, he was not guided by this principle so much as a ‘Statesman’s consciousness’ and a recognition that the labour convention’s success depended on certain compromises and as little erosion of state sovereignty as possible.³¹ The Graves minutes gave insight into the American delegation’s perspective, but conclude on March 14 when the Commission was at a

²⁶ COL 104, MD to JTS, 13.01.34

²⁷ COL 104, MD to JTS, 6.2.34; the appendices were shortened per his suggestion also.

²⁸ COL 105, Phelan to JTS, 28.2.34

²⁹ Guy H. Oyster (N/A), secretary for labour questions at the Peace Conference.

³⁰ COL 114 ‘Minutes of the labour conference JTG’; European spellings on the folder denote this was kept in Shotwell’s Geneva or Paris office.

³¹ Ibid.

critical juncture over the Henry Robinson amendment (the ‘special protocol’) to Article XIX which is discussed.

British records revealed that the post-1918 split between Barnes and the British Labour Party and TUC PLP was not as rigid as portrayed in some Party histories, discussed below. The Labour Party Archive (at the People’s History Museum, ‘PHM’ from here) and its Arthur Henderson papers held little material relative to Barnes after 1918, but contained some original correspondence showing that he was keeping the Labour Party chairman abreast of War Cabinet discussions despite leaving to stand with the Coalition.³² Similarly, correspondence between Labour’s William Gillies³³ and Hodgson regarding the delegates for the proposed Inter-allied Labour and Socialist Conference helped demonstrated that Barnes was an important conduit for infusing the Labour Commission with some of the 1919 Berne Conference’s principles, and for Lloyd George when it came to information-gathering about labour and the Peace Conference.³⁴ Barnes acted as a go-between, telling Lloyd George what British Labour expected from Paris, and informing Henderson what he could reasonably expect from the War Cabinet and the Allies.

The Parliamentary Archive’s (‘TPA’ from here) David Lloyd George papers made Barnes’ multiple roles exceedingly evident. They revealed a wealth of original correspondence between Barnes and the Prime Minister highlighting his importance to the War Cabinet and peacetime coalition on numerous topics, also featuring some more Henderson documents. The collection underscores Lloyd George’s fluctuating interest

³² PHM LSI 5/1/9, GNB to AH, 4.12.18

³³ William Gillies (1884–1958) Scottish Fabian and secretary to the Labour Party’s research division sometimes acted as Henderson’s liaison; his position made him exempt from war service. See appendices.

³⁴ PHM LSI 5/1/47, 48, 8.1.19 and 10.1.19

in labour matters, and that Barnes was dedicated to keeping the Prime Minister attuned to labour's thinking at any given time, not so much as a 'mole' for the imperialists but out of his sincere desire to see their needs met, and fulfil the aim of representing them in Paris. Barnes kept Lloyd George abreast of the Labour Convention's development during and after the Labour Commission, unafraid to ask for the Prime Minister's attention during trying times. The frankness and emotional pitch of some of the exchanges between the two is noteworthy, particularly around German reparations which Barnes abhorred.³⁵ Lloyd George often spoke highly of Barnes in his published works, and also of the 'constant help he gave me as a colleague' in the introduction to Barnes' memoirs: 'In many a crisis fraught with destiny his calm and wise counsel was of priceless value.'³⁶ Upon forwarding his resignation to the King in February 1920, the Prime Minister spoke of Barnes' 'fine achievement' in connection with the ILO's establishment, a 'magnificent piece of work...its success is more attributable to your initiation and wise guidance than to any other living man.'³⁷

The National Archive ('TNA' from here) was a most vital resource for many documents chronicling Barnes' long and varied political career which are located in numerous collections. Many of the official records are dry, and bear the marks of editing and revision, while others were more unabridged and therefore more rewarding. This research naturally relied on series 23 and 24 War Cabinet conclusions and memoranda, known for their reliability but relative brevity. Extensive examination of Foreign Office series 608 and 371 proved valuable for their preservation of original

³⁵ TPA DLG F/4/3/17; 2, 3.6.19: Barnes suggested a scheme of international finance whose 'big spirit' would 'help Germany get on her legs and bind the other in mutual interest'; he and Shotwell visited the occupied areas a short time later out of human interest to make 'observations and enquiries': report @ TPA LG F/4/3/22. A complete Barnes biography would fully explore his long-standing preoccupation with German social issues.

³⁶ Barnes, *FWWC*, p. ix

³⁷ TPA LG F/4/3/34

documents and hand-written notes by numerous civil servants and Ministers. Series 608/238 included the official British record of the Labour Commission sittings, related reports and memoranda; minutes of the British Empire Delegation ('BED') sessions regarding the Labour Commission's work; and Drafting Committee copies of Commission reports circulated in Paris. Shotwell did not reproduce the minutes of the BED sessions that Barnes chaired and only made reference to their outcomes in *Origins*' first volume. Series 608/239 contained much early correspondence and drafts pertaining to the British labour scheme's inception. It also held international and British press reviews of Peace Conference developments, including criticism from domestic Labour presses and the wider world. Valuable material discovered in series FO 371/3439 included correspondence between Balfour's office and The League to Abolish War (LAW), the pro-League organisation Barnes chaired, discussed below. It also holds early drafts and correspondence regarding the Philimore Report advocating for a post-war democratic 'league of nations', which is also discussed in relation to Barnes' LAW chairmanship.

The vast array of detailed Washington Conference Organising Committee records showing Barnes' intrinsic involvement are scattered across TNA's LAB 2 (Ministry of Labour) series, particularly 771 and 774, as well as within the FO 608/241 file. These provided further insight into Barnes' continuing commitment to the ILO mission after the Labour Convention was adopted, discussed briefly in the Epilogue. Many of these records have been neglected and remain poorly catalogued, and some of its folders still refer to their 1930s-era catalogue numbers which are hard to trace in TNA's electronic search system. To fully explore these one must visit the repository. Rodney Lowe noted this in his study of the Ministry of Labour, 1916-39, *Adjusting to*

Democracy (1986), and it would appear they have had little consideration since then.³⁸

The Organising Committee for the first international Labour Conference in Washington was virtually a continuation of the Labour Commission without Barnes' official membership, and as the British Government administrated and financed its work, the reams of paper in these files speak to the magnitude and minutiae involved in such a feat.

TNA series FO 608/149 holds documents relating to Barnes and the Washington Conference, his involvement with the Supreme Council over neutral, German and Austrian delegates,³⁹ and evidence of Barnes' personal involvement in arranging for German labour conference delegates who, in the end, never arrived in America owing to travel complications. 608/241 holds records of the League of Nations Council demonstrating Barnes' early, strong support for the League, and his work with Robert Cecil in arguing the benefits of coterminous membership of the League and ILO to anyone who would listen. The contents of 608 and 241 provided more understanding of Barnes' belief systems and the efforts he made to uphold them in his official capacity through policy decisions, inspiring research beyond this project's remit.

The British Library's collection of newspapers, rare pamphlets and books was essential for examination of Barnes' life and influences. Its collection greatly informed the entire thesis but was particularly relevant for the biography chapter. It holds his 1923 memoir *From Workshop to War Cabinet*, texts of Barnes' speeches and interviews, biographical pamphlets he wrote for the ILP and other co-operative and

³⁸ Rodney Lowe, *Adjusting to Democracy: The Role of the Ministry of Labour in British Politics, 1916-1939* (Oxford: 1986 Clarendon Press), p.v

³⁹ Barnes urged Clemenceau to let them attend or all of organised labour would shun the conference ; TNA FO 608/149/195, 17.8.19

trade union periodicals, and various League of Nations Union publications not available elsewhere. London Metropolitan University, the official repository for both the TUC and the ILO in London, was valuable for its collection of reference works pertaining to all aspects of trade unionism and the early Labour Party when it still shared its office with the TUC. It also holds the daily reports of the 1919 Washington Conference and literature relating to the conventions passed there. The Barnes artifacts held at the Women's Library at the London School of Economics donated by a family member luckily escaped destruction by the Blitz, and contains personal effects such as family photos, postcards, awards and honours he had received after leaving public life. The touching mementoes they preserve reinforce the desire to create a fuller biographical survey of Barnes, and it is hoped that a complete volume on his life and work will follow.

An overview of some of the other primary sources and secondary works that have most informed and inspired this research follows as they have helped to identify Barnes' political ideology in some instances, and locate 'gaps' in the historiography pertaining to his ILO-related work in others. Some publications through the nineteen-thirties may also be considered primary sources for the contemporary and contextual insights they provided. Barnes' memoir *From Workshop to War Cabinet* (1923) figures prominently throughout the thesis, as his personal archive was destroyed during the London Blitz.⁴⁰ It is a rich source for his colourful, entertaining depictions of situations and personalities he encountered during his seventeen-year career as an MP and beyond. While seeking to correct prevailing interpretations of past events, Barnes was often deferential and self-deprecating, showing decided humility. A prolific public

⁴⁰ Per his daughter Jessie (same name as his wife) in Hazlehurst et al., *A Guide to the Papers of British Cabinet Ministers 1900-1964* (Cambridge: 1996 Cambridge University Press/Royal Historical Society), p.47; Barnes said he maintained no diary and saved few letters as well; Barnes, *FWWC*, p.xi

speaker and writer, he wrote many editorials and newspaper articles, several short biographies, a number of extended treatises on industrial management and engineering and published several works on the International Labour Organisation and the Co-operative movement. Barnes was well-travelled in work and leisure, taking several trips to Germany from 1898 which resulted in his fondness for its people and culture, as well as visiting Canada, America, Norway and elsewhere. Late in life he went with his wife Jessie through South Africa to Rhodesia, and to Port Said, where he was happily surprised to see Scotch whiskey for sale.⁴¹ After his extended visit to Palestine and Egypt he wrote *An Eastern Tour* (1921)⁴² which merits closer examination elsewhere.

Several biographical chapters about Barnes helped inform the chronology of the most significant events in Barnes' life before the creation of the British scheme for the ILO Convention, a full list is included in the bibliography. J.S. Middleton's⁴³ brief but informative entry in Legge's *Dictionary of National Biography, 1931-40* (1949), was based on Barnes' memoir plus 'private information; personal knowledge'. It offers a broad, uncritical outline of his career with basic facts.⁴⁴ Middleton was the only biographer to mention the portrait of Barnes which hangs in the ILO office in Geneva, painted to commemorate his services toward its creation.⁴⁵ Baylen and Gossman (eds) *Biographical Dictionary of Modern British Radicals, 1870-1914* (1988) defined some of the numerous tensions permeating Barnes' life as a socialist and Parliamentarian, yet the claim that he had a 'realistic, if somewhat cynical, view of the political abilities of

⁴¹ Dundee, Perth and Forfar *People's Journal*, 7.1.33

⁴² Barnes, *An Eastern Tour* (UK: 1921 Co-operative Printing Society)

⁴³ J S ('Jim') Middleton (1878-1962), Labour Party secretary for 40 years; see appendices.

⁴⁴ Middleton, in L.G. Wickham Legg, *Dictionary of National Biography, 1931-40* (henceforth *DNB*), (London: 1949 Oxford University Press) p.42

⁴⁵ 'A portrait of Barnes, by Murray Urquhart, was presented to the International Labour Office, Geneva' As of March 2015, the portrait's plaque was missing and its location unknown.

the common worker' is coarse.⁴⁶ The workers were easily misled, Barnes wrote sympathetically, for their lives of toil had denied them the opportunities of self-education that others took for granted. He said stated in 1919 that they had led 'a life cribbed, cabined and confined: -

He has but little time to read, except the news-paper. He has little chance of meeting people of refinement. He lives in mean streets all his life, while he is seeing others who have grown rich by speculation... division is inevitable unless there is some helpful mutual contact between the workman and other classes, because in his isolation the workman becomes an easy prey of the man with the little knowledge, which is a dangerous thing...⁴⁷

Incomplete and inaccurate depictions of Barnes may have contributed to his lack of adequate representation in Labour Party histories of the mid-nineteen-seventies through the early nineties. One example is Nield's comparatively in-depth chapter in *Dictionary of Labour Biography* (1977, 'DLB'). It drew on numerous sources to present more facts and commentary about Barnes than most, noting that the 'empirical and undogmatic' Socialist initiated a Henry George study group as a young trade unionist.⁴⁸ It also rightly and importantly identified that his list of proposals in 1918 directly influenced the Labour Chapter of the Treaty, noting his optimism about the ILO's future and feeling that the Convention's acceptance by the Peace Conference was his greatest achievement.⁴⁹ However, contradictory opinions infer flawed logic and a poor methodology. The characterisation that 'his general political ideas were shifting towards the right' after becoming an MP in 1906 epitomises a common over-statement

⁴⁶ Head in Baylen and Gossman (eds) *Biographical Dictionary of Modern British Radicals, 1870-1914* (henceforth *Radicals*,) (UK: 1979 Harvester Press), an un-cited 1901 engineering journal article was paraphrased., p.64

⁴⁷ George N. Barnes, 'The Perils of Materialism to the Worker' in *The Religion in the Labour Movement* (London: 1919 Holborn Press), p. 14

⁴⁸ Nield in Bellamy and Saville (eds) *Dictionary of Labour Biography*, Vol. IV (henceforth Nield, *DLB*)(1977) .p.8

⁴⁹ Nield, *DLB*, p.12

this thesis addresses: Barnes understood the limits of parliamentary socialism earlier than some of his Independent Labour Party ('ILP') contemporaries. Nield more accurately assessed elsewhere that Barnes displayed increasing moderation in industrial and political matters that reflected political realities, as most early Labour Party members did upon entering Parliament.⁵⁰

Working from Barnes' memoir, Nield did mention Barnes' staunch anti-Bolshevism and belief that it was 'where madness lay', but the crucial the reason for this – his early disenchantment with German-inspired revolutionary rhetoric – was ignored. That crucial experience fed his guiding belief that the class war was deeply anti-social and self-destructive to the workers.⁵¹ Another criticism is made when, after consideration of Barnes' steadfast support for the Government's war policies and his continuation in the 1918 Coalition Government, Nield opined that it was 'doubtful whether he appreciated at the time the degree to which his ideas and attitudes had moved away from those of his early years.'⁵² This swingeing criticism came despite an earlier statement that Barnes had long believed that labour's emancipation relied on working-class representation in Parliament. A fuller consideration would conclude that Barnes was never a revolutionary despite his early associations. Finally, no solid explanation is offered for the statement that Barnes' last few years in Cabinet were difficult. This 1977 entry contains useful data about Barnes's life and work, but it is subjective in its focus.

Brivati and Heffernan's compendium of essays, *The Labour Party, a centenary history* (2000)⁵³ mentions Barnes several times, but primarily in relation to the Party's

⁵⁰ Ibid., p.10

⁵¹ Ibid, p.13

⁵² Ibid, p.12

⁵³ Brian Brivati, Richard Heffernan (eds) *The Labour Party, a centenary history* (Henceforth

early formation; neither his war record nor relationship with Lloyd George is discussed. Taylor's depiction of Barnes inferred that he took a swing-to-the-right over time: it was stated that Barnes was the 'left-wing general secretary of the ASE...(who) took a prosaic view of the LRC's purpose', and part of a group of trade union officials who viewed socialist ideology with 'cautious realism and suspicion.'⁵⁴ Chadwick's entry suitably recognised Barnes as a 'reformist voice' from 1900-24 and a prominent figure like Philip Snowden⁵⁵ who 'supported reform, and pointed to foreign examples of socialist success in countries such as Germany and Sweden.'⁵⁶ Finally, Ellison assessed how Barnes and the other early ILP reformists held a positive view of the state, noting the divergence of ideology that was in evidence. He juxtaposed Ramsay MacDonald's evolutionary socialism against the more pragmatic ideas of men like Barnes and J R Clynes.⁵⁷ The former saw the modern state as 'the cornerstone of the socialist commonwealth in waiting', growing its social and economic role as capitalism withered away, whereas the latter's view was 'stripped of the ILP's socialist rhetoric', advocating for the state to provide prompt support for unskilled and non-unionised workers when voluntary efforts and charity failed.⁵⁸ *Centenary* made some thoughtful assessments of Barnes' early career, but his work in progressive social reform, as an MP from 1906 and upon entering the Ministry of Labour under Lloyd George, is neglected.

'Centenary') (Basingstoke: 2000 Palgrave Macmillan)

⁵⁴ Robert Taylor, 'out of the bowels of the movement: the trade unions and the origins of the LP 1900-18', in *Centenary*, p.21

⁵⁵ 1st Viscount Philip Snowden, PC (1864-1937), British socialist politician, Labour MP, journalist and agitator, see appendices.

⁵⁶ Andrew Chadwick 'A miracle of politics: the rise of labour 1900-45', *Centenary*, p.324

⁵⁷ John Robert Clynes (1863-1949), Labour MP, trade unionist, ILP and LRC co-founder.

⁵⁸ Nick Ellison 'Labour and Welfare Politics' in *Centenary*, p.424:

Two fairly recent, compact entries on Barnes in biographical Labour Party works offered commentary from differing political perspectives. David Marshall MP⁵⁹ contributed to *Men Who Made Labour* (2006), a centrist compendium of biographies commemorating the centenary of the 1906 PLP.⁶⁰ Marshall sentimentally introduced Barnes as ‘a much neglected and underestimated giant of the trade union and Labour movement... a pioneer of old age pensions and national insurance, of minimum employment conditions for women and young people, and of industrial safety and the right of combination.’ It is an accessible reference article for general information, but does little to emphasise the conflicts running through Barnes’ political career. It gives fair attention to Barnes’ Labour Commission work, but is very brief regarding the aftermath. Marshall observed that Barnes’ draft for the ILO scheme included many of the ‘minimum requirements’ the Berne International Labour and Social Conference had discussed for submission to the League of Nations, noting his responsibility for steering it through the Labour Commission until it was ‘approved unanimously.’⁶¹ Marshall also borrowed extensively from Barnes’ memoir, but looked also into his relationship with the Communitarian movement and other early interests, leading to a more sympathetic understanding of his loyalty to the Government. *Men who Made Labour* exultantly concluded that ‘the life that most of us enjoy today and often take for granted exists only because of the labours of George Barnes and his colleagues of that era.’⁶²

⁵⁹ David Marshall (1941-) former Labour MP who served Glasgow/Glasgow East for 36 years; TGWU member, Secretary of the Scottish Group of Labour MPs 1981-01, et al.

⁶⁰ Alan Haworth and Dianne Hayter (eds) *Men Who Made Labour: The PLP of 1906 – the personalities and the politics* (henceforth *Men*) (Abingdon: 2006 Routledge). Published when Labour was celebrating its third majority Government under Tony Blair and held a 66-seat Commons majority; Blair wrote the foreword.

⁶¹ Marshall, *Men*, p.27

⁶² Ibid, p.28

Far less complimentary was the entry on Barnes in *British Labour Leaders* (2015),⁶³ a thinly-veiled attempt to revive Tony Blair's legacy⁶⁴ and typical of the limited view of Barnes generally put forward decades earlier. In a chapter combining Barnes and Willie Adamson,⁶⁵ a derogatory summary is badly researched and confused; it draws on few sources and brings little new to the discussion. The primary assertion is that Barnes epitomised mediocrity and accomplished little because he failed to lead the Party to electoral victory in 1910,⁶⁶ when it was still finding its organisational and ideological feet. The focus is primarily on how he became perceived by the radical ILP wing in the north-east as a traitor, and the claim that Barnes' 'big moment' came in replacing Henderson in the Lloyd George War Cabinet implies that he was merely ambitious. Barnes' pivotal Peace Conference and ILO connections are minimised, and a blood-thirsty assertion that his 'one major regret' was not in sooner bringing the Kaiser 'and other chief warmongers to trial, and if found guilty, to have hanged them out of hand' diminishes his contribution to the labour movement even further.⁶⁷ The entry's heavily left-leaning (and out-dated) interpretations sum up that Barnes was 'uninspiring' and became leader 'purely by default', denying the student another opportunity to better understand an important, transitional phase of the Labour Party's history.

To conclude this appraisal, it is worth noting how the 2001 edition of *Dictionary of Labour Biography* reduced Barnes' life and work to a few mere sentences. Its summary of his political trajectory did accurately acknowledge on the

⁶³ James Knox in Charles Clarke and Toby S James, *British Labour Leaders* (Henceforth '*Leaders*') (London: 2015 Biteback Publishing)

⁶⁴ Tony Blair (1953-), Leader of the Labour Party and Prime Minister, 1997-2007, et al; see appendices.

⁶⁵ Willie Adamson (1863-1936) Labour politician (non-socialist) and trade unionist; see appendices.

⁶⁶ Knox, *Leaders*, pp.73-89; 73-64

⁶⁷ Ibid, p.84; The statement was made in 1914 after the Kaiser issued a death sentence to his enemies.

one hand a transition from the nineteenth century to the twentieth, but on the other hand it again characterised Barnes inadequately: ‘His transition from militant trade unionist to patriotic coalitionist indicates the complexity of political choices for working-class choices’⁶⁸ Working class politics were undeniably undergoing vast, rapid change during Barnes’ life and career, but his transformation to right-wing is mistaken and oft repeated. At his core he remained unchanged from when he was a young man, and as a colleague from the Ministry of Labour in 1917 said of him: ‘Though called a Labour member, there was nothing of the modern-Socialist-Labourite about him. I should describe him as being really an old-fashioned and very cautious Scottish Whig...’⁶⁹

Barnes and his contemporaries

Some authors have been decidedly unflattering. Beatrice Webb described Barnes as weak in her typically acerbic manner despite their long acquaintance arising from her trade union research, deeming him unfit for either the War Cabinet or the Peace Conference.⁷⁰ Webb placed him among ‘suspect’ Labour Party and Trade Union officials accepting ‘places and honours’ in 1917⁷¹ and wrote ‘it is a travesty on political democracy that George Barnes should be in the War Cabinet from which Secretaries of State like Arthur Balfour are excluded.’⁷² Ramsay MacDonald’s opinion of Barnes, according to Marquand ‘had never been high’, and as soon as Barnes became Party Chairman in 1910 they were at odds over party tactics.⁷³ MacDonald and Henderson reportedly both saw him as a Keir Hardie-type figure, ‘too individualistic’, and prone to

⁶⁸ Sarah Welfare in G. Rosen (ed) *Dictionary of Labour Biography* (London: 2001 Politico’s Publishing), p.³¹

⁶⁹ A.S.T. Griffith-Boscawen, *Memories* (London: 1925 J. Murray), p.195; see appendices for bio.

⁷⁰ Beatrice Webb, *Diaries 1912-1924* [Margaret Cole, ed.] (Henceforth *Diaries*) (London: 1952 Longmans, Green and co) p.143; see appendices.

⁷¹ Webb, *Diaries*, p.89.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ David Marquand, *Ramsay MacDonald* (London: 1977 Jonathan Cape), pp.121-22

‘regard himself as a free-lance when it suits him and as a member of a team when it suits.’⁷⁴

Others have been much kinder, not surprisingly David Lloyd George, who wrote the foreword to Barnes’ memoir, praising his ‘moderation and courage’, comparing his temperament to that of Abraham Lincoln.⁷⁵ The former Prime Minister spoke of his ‘devoted and untiring service to the working classes’, yet that he knew ‘by instinct the limits of the attainable,’⁷⁶ and he remarked that ‘in many a crisis fraught with destiny his calm and wise counsel was of priceless value’ during the war.⁷⁷ Lloyd George was emotional about his friend Barnes in 1938 who was at that stage showing grave signs of old age, and recalled his virtues over several pages.

Mr. Barnes was a fine specimen of the sturdy Northern artisan; shrewd, sensible, practical, straightforward: a man whose education did not stop when he left the primary school for the works. He and Arthur Henderson belonged to the same breed. They justify the confidence of the reformers who fought for the inclusion of the workers amongst the governing classes of their country. Barnes had two predominant characteristics – honesty and common sense... honesty means that he expresses an opinion or urges a course of action without reference to its popularity but because he believes that it is right, and that when he thinks so he stands by that conviction at all hazards to himself.^{78,79}

The former Prime Minister made it seem like Barnes was the chief architect of the ILO plan, saying ‘It was he who took the principal initiative in the establishment of the International Labour Organisation and in the framing of its constitution. In his quiet, persistent way, he piloted it safely through the Committee as the principal delegate of

⁷⁴ Chris Wrigley citing MacDonald in *Arthur Henderson* (Cardiff: 1990 GPC Books) p.58

⁷⁵ Barnes, *FWWC*, vii

⁷⁶ Barnes *FWWC*, pp. ix-x

⁷⁷ Ibid, ix

⁷⁸ David Lloyd George, *The Truth about the Peace Treaties, vol I*. (London: 1938 V Gollancz)

⁷⁹ Ibid, pp. 649-50

Britain.⁸⁰ Frances Stevenson⁸¹ knew intimately the working relationship between the two men, and her diary read: -

He was on the whole I think the sanest of all of D.'s colleagues at the time of the peace conference. His calm, rather slow but unprejudiced mind could take stock of a situation in the shrewdest way, while he had the courage to express his judgements even when they were unpopular and unpalatable... the letters that passed between them are illuminating as a record of what D. knew he ought to do, but what circumstances prevented him from doing... (Barnes) has tremendous deep loyalties, which make for a charm he would otherwise lack.⁸²

Edward Phelan,⁸³ the Ministry of Labour civil servant who aided the British Delegation on the International Labour Commission, spoke of his 'quiet gentle manner'⁸⁴ and his 'curious habit of standing with crossed feet, an attitude which gave him an awkward appearance.'⁸⁵ Yet he was equal to large personalities regardless of the circumstances. Phelan recalled the ease with which Barnes navigated around the buffet during the Peace Conference: -

...it became apparent that we were heading straight for the spot where President Wilson, Clemenceau and Lloyd George had been respectfully allowed a modicum of elbow room, but Barnes went steadily on quite unperturbed.

Wilson, who was biting into a sandwich, gave him a friendly nod and the greeting of his companions indicated that he would be welcome to join the group. Barnes replied with a gesture towards the buffet and moving in behind Lloyd George devoted his whole attention to securing for me a glass of champagne and one for himself.

The incident illustrates features in his character which I found especially

⁸⁰ Ibid, p. 651

⁸¹ Frances (Stevenson) Lloyd George, Countess Lloyd-George of Dwyfor CBE (1888-1972) David Lloyd George's secretary and second wife, see appendices.

⁸² A J P Taylor (ed) *Lloyd George: A Diary by Frances Stevenson*, (London: 1971 Hutchinson & co) p.284

⁸³ Edward J Phelan, 'Memoirs: the birth of the ILO' in *Edward Phelan and the ILO* (Henceforth Phelan memoir) (Geneva: 2009 International Labour Office). Edward J Phelan (1888-1967) British civil servant, secretary in Paris to the British labour delegation and Assistant Secretary to the Labour Commission; see appendices.

⁸⁴ Phelan memoir, p.152

⁸⁵ Ibid.

attractive: his complete unselfconsciousness, his indifference to any flattering mark of attention, and a singleness of purpose in small things as in great which was proof against all distraction.⁸⁶

The Wedgwood survey of living Parliamentarians⁸⁷ contained many pithy entries; the chapter on Barnes, personally written by Wedgwood, is full of praise.⁸⁸ The term 'Socialist' is wholly absent and he argued that had Barnes left the Coalition in 1919 (presumably upon return from Paris as a Treaty signatory), 'he probably would have been Prime Minister in 1924 and history would have been very different. For Barnes, unlike MacDonald, was essentially a Liberal and devoid of any animosity. He was a man capable of great sacrifice, who wanted measures, not kudos.'⁸⁹ Wedgwood wrote:

The path to victory of the Trades Union leader is strewn with the corpses of competitors. The successful use of elbows develops self-assertion and confidence rather than the gentler virtues. On arrival he is apt to arm himself with suspicion and a cautious determination not to 'give himself away'. They do not as a rule make comfortable colleagues. How then can one account for such as Tom Burt⁹⁰ and George Barnes, with their quiet soft voices, and all that modesty and courtesy which endeared them to the House of Commons?

...Barnes had beside something which all his colleagues lacked - the sure knowledge of what was wrong with the world, and the certainty of the way out. He was firm (sic) founded on Adam Smith and Henry George with a faith that none could shake. Such a man could afford to be honest, and his comparative poverty today carries with it the dignity of a Cincinnatus⁹¹ into private life. George Barnes remains where he was in 1892.

This appraisal of Barnes in Labour Party biography indicated the potential for a

⁸⁶ Ibid, p.154

⁸⁷ Priscilla Baines, *Colonel Josiah Wedgwood, Questionnaire: Members of Parliament, 1885-1918* [henceforward Wedgwood] (London: 2012 Wiley-Blackwell)

⁸⁸ Colonel Josiah (1st Baron) Wedgwood (1872-1943), Lib-Lab politician, see appendices; the footnote for the entry read: 'Written by JCW; not corrected by the subject (who responded to the biography in a letter of 20 Feb. 1937: 'my record has been seen through coloured spectacles. But, at all events, I am glad of your friendship and good will'),p.157

⁸⁹ Wedgwood, p.158

⁹⁰ Thomas Burt (1837-1922), MP for Morpeth 1834-1918; Secretary, Northumberland Miners' Association, father of the HoC 1910-18,see appendices.

⁹¹ Wedgwood, p.158; Lucius Quinctius/Quintius Cincinnatus, Roman patrician and statesman who came to represent simple virtue, pre-Empire.

definitive biography as the existing literature is so incomplete and inconsistent, and as so many inaccuracies persist. His influence as a historical Labour Party figure or intrinsic proponent of the ILO's creation is at times dependent on the author or publisher's relative ideological bent: Mentions of Barnes wax and wane across the literature, largely owing to his support for the war (something the bulk of the Labour Party also backed) and his 1916-20 affiliation with the Lloyd George Coalition, ignoring important social reforms like Old Age Pensions (discussed below) that he played a significant role in bringing about.

Secondary literature

A summary of the secondary literature that helped inform and inspire this thesis follows. It also further identifies gaps across several areas of historiography relevant to Barnes. Some of the earlier works referenced served as both primary and secondary sources of information, as they conveyed contemporary observations and opinion, reflecting to some degree the socio-political zeitgeist of the time in which they were written.

Both volumes of *Origins of the International Labour Organization* (1934) served as a primary source inspiration for this work as the introduction discussed, but its first volume also served as a valuable secondary source. Published for the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, it was part of the 'The Paris Peace Conference History and Documents' educational series in an examination of the ILO's creation for the sake of a primarily American readership.⁹² Borrowing from Woodrow Wilson's principle of open covenants, it reproduced formerly classified documents and

⁹² Correspondence in Shotwell's Geneva and Columbia *Origins* papers denote his sending copies from New York to former Labour Commission members in England upon its publication.

memoranda from France, Great Britain, and Belgium as well as the United States in Volume two. In Volume one, essays by former Labour Commission members, and international academics and technical experts provided invaluable historical background from a number of perspectives. Individual chapters on the Allied and Central Powers' preparations for the Paris labour talks were highly readable as well as informative, highlighting the implications of drafting a blueprint for labour's restructuring in the Peace Conference setting. Published in 1934, it also had a propaganda imperative to fulfil as fascistic nationalism on the European continent grew; the ILO and League of Nations' benevolent aims are repeatedly used as a metaphor for continued world peace and harmony. *Origins* depicts the ILO's creation as a triumphal intercontinental effort indicative of the 'new internationalism', but is at the same time a continuum of 'the Whiggish narrative' and an interesting convergence of two ideologies.⁹³ Shotwell's somewhat unwieldy tome emphasised the British role to a great extent, yet it remains a potent educational artefact for the documents and narratives it preserves, and is an authoritative source for students of ILO and Versailles Peace Conference history to embark from.

Written around the same time and somewhat more accessible, Francis Graham Wilson's *Labor in the League System* (1934),⁹⁴ provided a philosophical yet concise examination of the ILO's Labour Convention in connection with its League of Nations relationship. Wilson ably presented labour's rise during the pre-war period, and summarised some of the most salient arguments Barnes and the Commission faced in the light of their new-found responsibility, the inception of a world labour institution

⁹³ The continuation of Auguste Comte's (1798–1857) positivist conception of history, carried forward by Victorian and Edwardian historians (and newspapers), viewing the past in light of contemporary liberal 'progressive' accomplishments; see David Hume, William Stubbs, T. Babington Macaulay et al.

⁹⁴ Francis Graham Wilson, *Labor in the League system: a study of the International Labor Organization in relation to international administration* (USA: 1934 Stanford University), pp.34-50.

that had to be firm, yet flexible. It employed a more easily-followed, chronological layout than Shotwell's book. Wilson's exceedingly thorough footnotes indicate a robust methodology derived from numerous international resources.

There was an outpouring of ILO-related works upholding its virtues shortly after it formed in 1919, indicating the ongoing contention over the ILO under the League of Nations. Barnes epitomised in *The Industrial Section of the League of Nations* (1920),⁹⁵ a public address wherein he appealed to the enlightened mentality of the 'new internationalism', portraying ILO as 'an international Soviet of an evolutionary and constructive kind...' and its Conference as 'an opportunity of thinking, and not only of thinking, but of acting, internationally.'⁹⁶ The Fabian Society was no exception in heralding the ILO as a triumph over the past. Their 1921 tract⁹⁷ opened with the Labour Convention's prosaic Preamble, skipping directly to the Labour Charter's nine points of principle (the annex to the Labour Convention) before discussing the Labour Conference machinery. It emphasised that the annual Conference's over-arching purpose was to put the aims of the Charter and Preamble into universal practice, reflecting the 'economic necessity of the times' and the requirement that 'labour should be brought to an ever-increasing extent into conformity with justice.'⁹⁸

To commemorate the ILO's fiftieth anniversary and the British contribution in its creation, the Department of Employment and Productivity (formerly the Ministry of Labour, rebranded in 1968 during Harold Wilson's second ministry) published *Britain*

⁹⁵ George N Barnes (Oxford: 1920 OUP), a speech delivered at Balliol Hall, 28.5.20

⁹⁶ Ibid, p.16

⁹⁷ Wm. Stephen Sanders, *The International Labour Organisation of the League of Nations* (Henceforth Sanders) (London: 1921 Fabian Society)

⁹⁸ Sanders, p.13

and the ILO – The Story of Fifty Years (1969), with a forward by Barbara Castle.⁹⁹

This centre-left screed was bursting with national pride, part ILO history and part Government propaganda, published when the Department was promoting numerous international technical assistance programmes in Asia, Africa and Latin America (boosting economic growth and industrial education were Wilson's perennial high priorities). It is interesting to note its timing: the contentious White Paper that Castle and James Callaghan¹⁰⁰ secretly drafted, *In Place of Strife*, had recently been published.¹⁰¹ Castle proudly noted Britain's 'distinguished part' in contributing to social justice through its continued support of the ILO.¹⁰² Barnes is called a 'staunch Nonconformist', and given considerable prominence. Stewart opined that the ILO's launch was a vindication of his decision to stay in the Coalition when the Labour Party disassociated from the Government.¹⁰³ Fair enough, but reading that Lloyd George regarded Barnes as 'the authentic voice of Labour' upon replacing Henderson gives one pause. Lloyd George undoubtedly preferred Barnes *to be* the 'authentic' voice because he upheld the Allied Governments' policies when Henderson and the Labour Party resolved in favour of a negotiated peace.¹⁰⁴ Barnes' challenge in getting the Labour Convention adopted by the Peace Conference is noted, and Stewart went so far as to give him sole credit for the ILO scheme based upon a remark he made in his memoir.¹⁰⁵

⁹⁹ Rt Hon Barbara Ann Castle, Baroness Castle of Blackburn (1910-2002) in Margaret Stewart, (Henceforth 'Stewart'), *Britain and the ILO-The Story of Fifty Years* (London: 1969 Department of Employment and Productivity/HMSO)

¹⁰⁰ (Leonard) James 'Jim' Callaghan, Baron Callaghan of Cardiff (1912-2005), Labour PM 1976-79, see appendices.

¹⁰¹ TNA CAB 129/144/23, 23.9.69; its proposals to hobble the power of the trade unions split the Labour cabinet.

¹⁰² Stewart, 2nd page of introduction

¹⁰³ Ibid, p.6

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Stewart, p.11; Barnes *FWWC*, pp.247-8 the 'two sheets of typescript' Barnes referred to were the product of Ministry of Labour discussions c. 1918 he was involved in.

Although very proud of the ILO's creation, Barnes was exceedingly deferential about it and continually alluded to the combination of efforts required to bring it about.

One fact was badly twisted when Barnes's belief about German admission to the ILO is discussed, indicating a misunderstanding. Stewart's assertion that Barnes wanted ILO membership 'limited' to League nations gets it backwards.¹⁰⁶ Barnes always believed that coterminous League-ILO membership was necessary to keep all nations on an equal footing, and he argued for Germany's 'early' admittance to the ILO (as French labour, the IFTU and TUC also did) to make the Conference democratic and representative, and when it became apparent the League's constitution would remain uncertain for quite a while he redoubled his efforts. This 1969 publication was useful for some of its data, bibliography of source documents and interesting photographic artefacts, but as a historical document it is unreliable.

Alcock's 1971 work provided a more academically reliable assessment of the ILO's history, and Barnes' role in its inception.¹⁰⁷ It provided a good, concise overview of historical, international aspirations for an annual world labour conference going back as far as the late fifteenth century, noting the attempts of the First and Second International to form permanent links between the trade unions of different countries. Alcock's work combined the findings of many international experts, and ultimately deduced that the ILO could not exist until the war prompted a universal sacrifice of national sovereignty which was previously unthinkable.¹⁰⁸ Alcock described the Lloyd George Government's inception of the Ministry of Labour as a confirmation of class collaboration and of recognition that the working class had

¹⁰⁶ Stewart, p.18

¹⁰⁷ Anthony Alcock, *History of the International Labour Organisation* (Henceforth Alcock)(London: 1971 Macmillan)

¹⁰⁸ Alcock, p. 11

become ‘a responsible element in its own right for the first time.’¹⁰⁹ Barnes was given credit for giving powerful expression in Britain to the idea that ‘the working class had a part to play in the future problems of the nation’, and that there must never be a return to the pre-war hardship and division between worker’s castes that plagued their existence.¹¹⁰

Alcock made several mentions of Barnes’ contributions toward the ILO scheme in a work devoid of overt left- or right-wing leanings. He depicted Barnes’s stint as a member of the Lloyd George pre- and post-war coalitions in a favourable light, portraying his contribution to the Labour Party and labour movements as positive. The argument that Barnes was integral towards the acceptance of organised labour as a part of governmental machinery, beyond munitions production, was well made. Under Barnes’s stewardship at the MoL, ‘class collaboration’ had signified that ‘the working class had been accepted as a responsible element in its own right for the first time’, he wrote.¹¹¹ Alcock’s interpretations also supported some traditional arguments, Marxist as well as realist, that the ILO in the post-war settlement was part of the universal initiative for better relations with trade unions and a pragmatic public relations exercise. His comprehensive book also upheld some of the ‘economic equalisation’ theories of the immediate post-war period that defended the ILO’s necessity on the grounds of economic self-protection and the preservation of Britain’s Empire,¹¹² theories that also indicated the backwards-looking desire for a pre-war ‘return to

¹⁰⁹ Arthur Marwick argued that total war prompted a surge in the ethos of collectivism, and a ‘participation’ dimension wherein underprivileged groups united to drive social progress, which transcended political/class lines; the shock of war arguably helped Lloyd George’s ‘national unity’ campaign. *The Deluge: British Society and the First World War* (London, 1965), pp. 289-290

¹¹⁰ Alcock, pp. 14-15

¹¹¹ Ibid, p. 14

¹¹² E. Staley, *World economic development: Effects on advanced industrial countries* (Montreal, ILO, 1944) argued that the ‘equalisation theory’ justifications of the immediate post-war era were overstated; Barnes’ 1926 *History of the ILO* (London: 1926 Williams & Norgate; henceforth ‘Barnes *History*’) made several arguments for raising labour standards in pre-industrial countries would help British superiority maintain healthy world trade, see pp.35-7; 45-7; 67-72.

normalcy.’

In 1989, Ewing in *Britain and the ILO*¹¹³ also made arguments that combined Marxist and realist perspectives. The author asserted that the war had only temporarily interrupted the developmental progress of international labour standards, assisted by the war’s horrors and the fear in the West that the October Revolution engendered.¹¹⁴ This implies two of the ‘four dimensions’ the historian Arthur Marwick espoused regarding total war’s societal effects; the first being destruction and disruption, followed by the second wherein existing social institutions are tested, and replaced with better ones.¹¹⁵ Ewing shared Barnes’ explanation as to why the ILO machinery was not as ‘radical a venture’ as some trade unionists might have liked: it was a virtual impossibility given the small window of time the British Delegation had, more so given the intricacies involved in considering the individual needs of different countries.¹¹⁶

One prominent writer on the Versailles peace talks, Margaret Macmillan, commented somewhat flippantly in *The Peacemakers* (2001) that the Labour Commission ‘worked away quietly’ during the Peace Conference.¹¹⁷ This superficial impression might be owing to the ‘languid interest’ the plenipotentiaries gave to labour matters, but this thesis’ research showed that Barnes expended much effort to publicise the Commission’s work, bringing in Lloyd George for support when it was most needed. Things got so turbulent on the Commission that it nearly broke apart more than once, discussed below. Making matters worse, Barnes faced strident opposition from

¹¹³ K.D. Ewing, *Britain and the ILO* (2nd ed) (London: 1994 Institute of Employment Rights)

¹¹⁴ Ibid, p. 4

¹¹⁵ Arthur Marwick, *The Deluge: British Society and the First World War* (London, 1965), pp. 289-290

¹¹⁶ Ewing, op cit., pp. 6-7 lists the nine points of principle enshrined in the Labour Charter, and varying critiques of them w/secondary references.

¹¹⁷ Margaret Macmillan, *Peacemakers: The Paris Peace Conference of 1919 and Its Attempt to End War* (Henceforth *Peacemakers*)(UK: 2001 John Murray), pp. 221-224

the Commission President, the AFL Chairman, Samuel Gompers,¹¹⁸ and his American delegation cohorts. Gompers had been disparaging aspects of the draft Labour Convention with the American peace delegations, creating considerable prejudice against the British delegation's scheme which is also discussed. Macmillan argued that a lack of concern for the Commission's work fortuitously allowed the ILO to form 'with a minimum of fuss'¹¹⁹ and hold its first conference in October 1919. This glosses over a plethora of challenges Barnes faced during several difficult months. Yet it can be argued that the Foreign Secretaries' disinterest was a boon in the early phases, for it prevented the Commission from being tasked with complicated emigration issues ultimately left to the League of Nations.¹²⁰ Given her assessments it is not clear what documents Macmillan was working from, because the most accessible British records at The National Archive tell a rather different story. She at least noted with some irony that the ILO survives to this day and included Germany from the start, while the ill-fated League of Nations did not.¹²¹

The international law scholar and advisor to the ILO on human rights issues Bob Hepple noted briefly in *Labour Laws and Global Trade* (2005) that that Barnes, along with Albert Thomas¹²² and others, were 'co-opted into Government' following the shocks of the October Revolution and the war.¹²³ Those factors undoubtedly hastened the Government's formation of a labour ministry, but that is a broad assessment; such a thing was arguably on the cards given the Labour Party's entry into Parliament and cross-party support for industrial reforms intended to see off strikes.

¹¹⁸ Samuel L Gompers (1850-1924) American Federation of Labor (AFL) originator; see next section for fuller bio.

¹¹⁹ Macmillan, *Peacemakers*, p.223

¹²⁰ TNA FO 608/239/8, 5.2.19 'Emigration Problems and the Peace Conference' minutes

¹²¹ Macmillan, p.223

¹²² Albert Thomas (1878-1932) ILO's first Director, 1920-32; a prominent, moderate socialist; assistant editor of *L'Humanite*, the French Sociality Party newspaper; see appendices.

¹²³ Bob Hepple, *Labour Laws and Global Trade* (Oxford: 2005 Hart Publishing), p.29

Two fairly recent publications used an actor/agency methodological framework to critically re-examine the ILO's inception. The first by Hidalgo-Weber (2013) questioned the British role, concluding that earlier histories portraying them as its prime architects over-stated their case. She posited alternatively that they were sounding-boards for international ideas long circulating, seizing their moment as the war's victors to pursue an Imperialist economic agenda. Her critique of the 'Whig' historical narrative asserted the Britons were 'at the heart of a number of trans-national networks', combining their human resources, network connections and administrative expertise to ultimately shape the ILO into an 'international organisation consistent with (Britain's) economic and imperial interests.'¹²⁴ Hidalgo-Weber contended further that the British labour delegation were not leaders for reform but merely channelling the wishes of an international community of socialist and workers' groups: an argument backed by an arguable assertion that the Labour Charter's principles were ahead of most of British social legislation at the time.¹²⁵ Nevertheless, it rightly asserted that Barnes played a central role and was something of a leader in this 'channelling': his ideas accurately reflected those of the world labour network, enabling his delegation to 'absorb both the ideas of the Labour Party's peace programme and also international socialist ideas.' Barnes' drive to involve the trade unions and employers in the early Labour Charter's drafting was also recognised.¹²⁶

McKillen's *Making the World Safe for Labor* (2013) focussed on the relationship between American President Woodrow Wilson and the AFL concerning

¹²⁴ Hidalgo-Weber utilised many of the same sources as Shotwell for 'Social and Political Networks and the Creation of the ILO: The Role of British Actors' (Henceforth Hidalgo-Weber) in Kott and Droux (eds), *Globalizing Social Rights: The International Labour Organization and Beyond* (Basingstoke: 2013 Palgrave Macmillan/ILO), p.18

¹²⁵ Hidalgo-Weber, p. 17

¹²⁶ Ibid.

the ILO's creation from a foreign policy perspective, examining contemporary labour and working-class debates around the restructuring of international labour after the war.¹²⁷ McKillen employed a combination of American and British sources including Shotwell's two volumes, and Harvard University's collection of Arthur Henderson and J S Middleton papers to produce an interesting, wide-ranging study. She concluded that the diaspora Left was more responsible for creating American opposition to the League of Nations and the ILO's creation than previously considered. It was said that Wilson, who held that labour was central to maintaining a democratic peace, could not fully capitalise on any positive publicity his foreign policy had largely owing to the 'uniquely myopic lenses' through which the AFL viewed Britain and the European continent.¹²⁸ Gompers and his associates provided Wilson with poor intelligence, as they 'tended to oversimplify the enormous differences emerging between moderate Socialists and Labor (sic) Party activists on the one hand, and those promoting Bolshevism and social revolution on the other.'¹²⁹ Barnes, McKillen discovered, had been characterised by Chicago labour reporters as the 'conservative British Labor (sic) delegate' personally responsible for threatening America's standard wage principle, owing to Labour Convention clauses making exceptions for special economic or climactic conditions in certain countries. This assessment of Barnes was typical of 'harsh indictments of British imperialism' and 'growing disillusionment' with the Versailles negotiations emanating from American working class channels.¹³⁰

This thesis does not fault the standard assessment McKillen made that the ILO's Labour Convention was a primarily British innovation, or that the Labour Commission

¹²⁷ Elizabeth McKillen, *Making the World Safe for Workers: Labor, the Left, and Wilsonian Internationalism* (USA: 2013 University of Illinois Press)

¹²⁸ McKillen, p.31

¹²⁹ Ibid, pp.29-30

¹³⁰ Ibid, p.216

idea was in fact the ‘brainchild’ of Barnes,¹³¹ but a declaration that ‘the Americans crafted the first Labor (sic) bill of rights to be incorporated into the Treaty’, referring to the nine points of the Labour Charter, is contested.¹³² It is argued below that although Gompers fought heavily to see the AFL’s statements of labour principles incorporated into the Treaty, it was a far more international affair, and that the British led efforts to appease the Americans to keep things moving. McKillen also wrote that Gompers’ Labour Commission presidency was assured by Wilson and Barnes upon its formation,¹³³ but official records indicated that a French labour delegate nominated him. A comment that Barnes was ‘more conservative’ than Henderson is also debatable.¹³⁴ Both McKillen and Hidalgo-Weber’s 2013 publications depict British motivation for the ILO scheme as part of ‘preservation of Empire’ exercise (the latter more than the former, which utilised more British and European resources for its research). This was not wholly untrue, nor was it something Barnes shied away from when defending the ILO in his *History of the ILO* (1926, *passim*). Both 2013 publications critically and robustly analysed multiple sources and applied a stringent methodology to provide a number of fresh insights, despite any minor disagreements with their findings.

Insight into the ideology of Samuel Gompers was essential for understanding the root causes of the specific challenges Barnes faced from the American labour delegation. Gompers’ deep suspicion of European Socialism and rejection of the British Labour Party’s embrace of direct political representation was apparent early, and a combination of primary and secondary works helped explain this cross-Atlantic schism.

¹³¹ Ibid, pp.196-7)

¹³² Ibid, p.27

¹³³ Ibid, p.200

¹³⁴ Ibid.

Numerous speeches and editorials by Gompers and his AFL colleagues preserved in the journal *American Federationist* delineated a purely economic approach to trade unionism and a steadfast belief that the worker's command of the marketplace would lead to his emancipation.¹³⁵ Gompers' autobiography, *Seventy Years of Life and Labor* (1924)¹³⁶ provided some interesting and colourful passages, but it was completed at the end of his life and allegedly largely ghost-written by an 'uncritical admirer', therefore only marginally reliable.¹³⁷ *The Samuel Gompers papers* (vol. XI)¹³⁸ were more useful for gauging his attitude during various phases of his career. Gompers' recollection of his Labour Commission experience in *What Really Happened at Paris* (1921), a pro-Wilson compendium of essays by American Peace Conference delegates, revealed his confused Labour Commission priorities in detail. Secondary works included a number of semi-biographical, mainly realist-school publications that depicted a fiery character shaped during the earliest years of American industrialism.¹³⁹ Gerald Stearn's introduction to the compendium *Gompers* (1971)¹⁴⁰ provided an essential and concise overview of his career in trade unionism. Stearn effectively summed up the epitome of Gompers' credo, writing that he passed away in 1924 'without regret', and that his alleged last whispered words were to tell the workers that 'he kept the faith.'¹⁴¹

¹³⁵ *American Federationist*, the official magazine of the American Federation of Labor (1894-1952)

¹³⁶ Samuel N. Gompers, *Seventy years of life and labor* (Henceforth *Seventy years*)(New York, USA: 1948 Dutton)

¹³⁷ According to another Gompers biographer, John H M Laslett in 'Samuel Gompers and the Rise of American Business Unionism', in Dubofksy and Tine *Labor Leaders in America* (USA: 1987 University of Illinois Press), fn p.87

¹³⁸ Peter J. Albert and Grace Palladino (eds) *The Samuel Gompers Papers* (vol, XI, 1918-21) (Illinois, USA: 2009 University of Illinois Press)

¹³⁹ See bibliography, but for example Charles Rehmus, Doris McLaughlin and Frederick Nesbitt, eds., *Labour and American Politics* (2nd edition) (Ann Arbor, USA: 1978 University of Michigan); and Philip Taft, *The AFL in the Time of Gompers* (henceforth Taft) (New York, USA: 1970 Octagon Books) et al.

¹⁴⁰ Gerald E. Stearn, ed., *Gompers* (henceforth Stearn) (New Jersey, USA: 1971 Prentice Hall)

¹⁴¹ Stearn, p.1

The AFL was founded on the principle of freedom from political intervention in labour affairs. Gompers studied Marx intensely in the 1870s and viewed his works as ‘a terrific indictment of society’, but he later rejected socialism and its utopian ideals. Like Barnes, Gompers was disenchanted with his socialist contemporaries’ utopian rhetoric, accepting that industrialism and capitalism were both ‘historically correct phenomena’ working in tandem to shape society. However, unlike Barnes, who embraced the more philosophical aspects of Marx’s theories, Gompers developed a purely economic approach to working class reform, believing that Materialism was life’s driving force’, and that ‘economic, not political rights’ determined relative freedom.¹⁴²

Gompers held the AFL Presidency from its 1886 inception until his death, save in 1895 when a heavy socialist incursion temporarily unseated him. He was a shrewd and highly organised administrator and policy-maker with a ‘limitless reserve of energy, a brilliant public speaking style... (and) an ego born to be inflated.’¹⁴³ The AFL’s defeat of its predecessor, The Noble and Holy Order of the Knights of Labor (‘Knights’) which included skilled and unskilled workers, was complete by the turn of the century, and its membership swelled from 140,000 in 1886 to nearly 4,000,000 during the war.¹⁴⁴ As head of a Federation of skilled workers operating through local branches, Gompers held little authority himself. His real power came from growing and organising new branches, and applying external pressure to persuade and influence Congress, state legislatures, governors and presidents on labor causes. Gompers founded *American Federationist* as its publisher, editor and chief writer, and was a prolific and forceful public speaker and agitator. The success of his tenure relied

¹⁴² Ibid, pp.1-3

¹⁴³ Ibid, p.7

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, p.10

heavily on his gift for coercion and influencing the will of the major craft unions.

Gompers was a tough little man used to getting his way through his persuasive oratory.

The AFL had resolved in 1894 that ‘Party politics, whether they be democratic republican, socialistic, populist, prohibition, or any other, shall have no place in the conventions of the American Federation of Labor.’¹⁴⁵ Gompers declared during that Conference address that ‘The industrial field is littered with more corpses of organizations destroyed by the damning influences of partisan political action than from all other causes combined... Let the watchword be: no political party domination over the trade unions: no political party influence over trade union action.’¹⁴⁶ He continually suffered attacks from the left and the right. Socialists tried to permeate the AFL with their own policies and create division within the local branches; they ran candidates for the executive against Gompers regularly, and their presses condemned him as a cynical faux revolutionary and class collaborator. From the right, the heavily-bankrolled National Association of Manufacturers (‘NAM’) persecuted him at every turn, framing him as the organiser of violent strikes: worse than a socialist, he was ‘the enemy of due process and law and order.’¹⁴⁷ His greatest nemesis, however, was the State, which repeatedly issued punitive injunctions against labour to suspend union activity before strikes could occur. ‘Organised labour entered the twentieth century with a criminal record’ wrote Stearn, presenting numerous cases before the war where Congress and the Supreme Court ultimately pushed Gompers into a political direction despite being repulsed by the idea.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁵ *American Federationist*, vol 3. (1896), p.130

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid*

¹⁴⁷ Stearn, p.12

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid*, pp.12-13

Gompers was portrayed as turning ‘from pacifism to chauvinism’ during the war out of loyalty to Wilson, supporting the League of Nations and serving on advisory boards and striving for industrial peace in the name of the war effort.¹⁴⁹ Before America joined the war, Gompers was beholden to the idea that an international trade union conference, held at the same time and place as the peace conference, might assist in the permanent abolition of war, as many international trade unionists did.¹⁵⁰ After America’s 1917 entry into the war, the AFL tried to encourage visits between Allied and American trade unionists, but got involved in trying to relocate the IFTU from Berlin to Amsterdam, eventually cutting off relations with German trade union leaders. The AFL was emphatic not to engage with labour representatives of belligerent countries, and felt the international labour conference proposed for Berne for October 1917 was ‘premature and untimely’, and could lead to ‘no good purpose.’¹⁵¹ Through 1918 Gompers sought to strengthen ties with Allied labour, but his visits to England that autumn crystallised his position against ‘socialist’ political labour.

Gompers headed an AFL delegation to the TUC’s Fiftieth Annual Conference in Derby in September 1918. The ‘broad church’ ethos of the political Labour Party and its constituency of socialist labour evaded Gompers, who disregarded the historical underpinnings of the TUC-Labour Party relationship: -

The Labour Party of England dominates the labour movement of England. All the time I was in England I never heard of a phrase like ‘The British Trade Union Movement and the Labour Party’. I never heard it said ‘The Parliamentary Committee of the British Trade Union Congress and the Executive Committee of the Labour Party.’ It was always the Labour Party and the Trade Union Congress.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Taft, p.427

¹⁵¹ Taft, pp.429-430

¹⁵² Samuel Gompers, *Should a Political Labour Party Be Formed? (Henceforth Party)*, text of address to the AFL Conference, NYC, Dec. 1918 (Washington, DC: 1918 AFL), p.11

During his TUC address he boasted of the AFL's political independence,¹⁵³ and alluded to international workers' solidarity while differentiating between the American and European labour movements: -

The American Trade Union movement, as expressed by the American federation of Labour, is one and comprehensive, and is all its own... It is willing that all should advise and suggest, but we yield not on inch to anybody – individual or corporate – the right of leadership of our movement. That remark has reference to the Democratic Party, the Republican Party, the Socialist Party, or any other party. We stand for ourselves, and attract the workers of our country wherever we can...¹⁵⁴

Gompers and his delegation next attended the Inter-allied Labour Conference (of Socialist political groups and trade unions) in London a few weeks later. The American Socialist Party had not been invited, however, so Jean Longuet, Marx's grandson and a leader of French labour, moved to reduce the American delegation's votes. Gompers was incensed, declaring that the AFL represented American labour as the majority voice.¹⁵⁵ The French motion was lost. It was resolved that a conference of labour representatives would be held to run concurrently with the official peace conference, but Gompers was deeply perturbed at constant references to 'socialism and socialists' with far fewer references to 'labour'.¹⁵⁶

Back home, moves to create an American political labour party sent Gompers reeling.¹⁵⁷ His December 1918 AFL Conference address recalled with horror the

¹⁵³ He expounded upon the AFL challenge to the Secretary of Labour regarding uniform protection of child workers at the Federal level; see William Carey Jones, 'Child Labour Decision', 6 Cal. L. Rev. 395 (1918) in *California Law Review*, (6) 6, 9.1919 < <http://dx.doi.org/doi:10.15779/Z38MV5S> >

¹⁵⁴ *Report of the Fiftieth Annual TUC Conference*, (London: 1918 TUC) p.231

¹⁵⁵ Taft p.431

¹⁵⁶ Ibid

¹⁵⁷ The Chicago Federation of Labor's moved in November 1918 to create a State-level labour party branch; approved on 3 December by the Illinois FOL Conference; days later the Central Federated Union of Greater New York also created a labour party; a special January Conference then founded the American Labour Party of New York; the short-lived National Labour Party it begat merged in 1920

situation he had encountered in London: he was aghast to see his delegation's names printed on admittance cards that confirmed their attendance at a 'Socialist'

conference: -

I refused to sign my name, or permit my name to be put upon any card of that character. My associates were as indignant as I was and refused to sign any such credential.¹⁵⁸

There was considerable commotion and his delegation nearly walked out before TUC members assembled to escort them inside. Henderson had cited the reason for this 'error' as old stationery and a minor oversight at the printing press, but the problem for Gompers was that such carelessness revealed a deeper truth: -

I want to call your attention to the significance of that explanation. That is, that the trade union movement of Great Britain was represented at these former conferences, but at this conference the importance of Labour was regarded as so insignificant that everybody took it for granted that it was perfectly all right to have the credential card read, 'Inter-Allied Socialist Conference,' and with the omission of this more important term 'Labor'.

...The fact is that an independent political labour party becomes either radical, so-called, or else reactionary, but it is primarily devoted to one thing and that is vote-getting. Every sail is trimmed to the getting of votes...¹⁵⁹

Gompers headed off to Paris only weeks later, cynical and suspicious. He had been appointed by his President to an International Labour Commission comprising both socialists and members of European Governments, and was disappointed at not being made a full Peace Conference delegate. Stearn summed up his contribution to labour there in a single sentence: 'Still, he went to Versailles and helped start the International

with the 'Committee of 48', forming the Farmer-Labour Party which only lasted until 1924.

¹⁵⁸ *Party*, op cit., pp.9-10

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid*, p.10

Labor (sic) Office.’¹⁶⁰ In 1921, Gompers delivered a caustic account of the Labour Commission sittings depicting a ceaseless ‘contest against reaction and misunderstanding and wilfulness and Utopian foolishness (that) was one of the most difficult of my life: -

Striving day after day against all of these conditions and these forces, in order to bring into existence a document having in it something of constructive thought, something of worthy and workable purpose, was an experience through which I have no desire to pass again.¹⁶¹

Gompers lumped the British delegation in the with the wilful ‘European Socialists’ on the Commission, except when the Dominion leaders were defended for their support of his delegations’ proposals for concessions in respect of self-governing and federated nations.¹⁶² Nearing his deathbed he sounded kinder, and was recorded as saying ‘The British saw our real difficulty more appreciatively than other groups and Mr Barnes of the British delegation helped in the development of proposals to which we could agree.’¹⁶³

Concluding this overview of some works that informed the background reading for this research are several trade union-related publications. Wrigley’s all-encompassing *David Lloyd George and the British Labour Movement* (1976)¹⁶⁴ filled an essential historical gap by examining Lloyd George’s relationship with British labour in depth. This work was particularly helpful in assessing the wide-ranging implications of the 1917 engineering strikes in munitions industries, a critical juncture

¹⁶⁰ Stearn, op cit., p. 14

¹⁶¹ Edward Mandell House and Charles Seymour (eds) *What really happened at Paris: the story of the Peace Conference, 1918-1919 by American delegates* (Henceforth *What happened*) (New York, USA: 1921 Charles Scribner’s Sons), p.323

¹⁶² *What happened*, p.319

¹⁶³ Gompers, *Seventy years*, op cit., p.492; Gompers’ final years were bleak, he was nearly blind, struggling with Bright’s disease, and had lost both his daughter and wife in close proximity.

¹⁶⁴ Chris Wrigley, *David Lloyd George and the British Labour Movement* (Hassocks, UK: 1976 Harvester Press)

that tested Barnes' capacity for leadership of a national policy directive that boded well for his Paris role after the war. Some background to the ASE's history, and depictions of Barnes' time as General Secretary was provided through Jeffery's *The Story of the Engineers* (1946, *passim*), as well as Clegg, Fox and Thompson's *History of British Trade Unions since 1889* (1964).¹⁶⁵ Fraser's *History of British Trade Unionism* was useful for its concise explanations of the underpinnings of the 'new unionism' movement that emanated from the amalgamation of the craft unions at the end of the nineteenth century.¹⁶⁶ Beatrice and Sidney Webb's *Trade Unionism* (1920 edition)¹⁶⁷ is an interesting historical artefact in itself, notable for its detailed, oft-critical historical narratives about the growth of the trade union movement and its relationship with the State. It provided essential, contemporary analysis of historical labour legislation, assessing the legal as well as philosophical implications. Pimlott and Cook's *Trade Unionism in British Politics: the first 250 years* (1995) summarised how trade unionism evolved as it developed independent political activity. Wrigley's chapter therein assessed that although the Labour Party might have been unhappy about a 'tame Labour man' like Barnes representing them in Paris, moderate trade union leaders like him warmly supported Wilson's policies in Britain, and it was owing to the British labour movement that the demand for a League of Nations was so strong.¹⁶⁸

As this thesis touches upon a number of topics and themes, including but not limited to George Barnes and aspects of Labour Party history, the organised labour and

¹⁶⁵ H.A. Clegg, Alan Fox and A.F. Thompson (eds), *A History of British Trade Unions since 1889 (Vol. 1: 1889-1910)* (Oxford: 1964 Clarendon Press)

¹⁶⁶ W. Hamish Fraser, *A history of British trade unionism, 1700-1998* (New York USA: 1999 St. Martin's Press)

¹⁶⁷ Sidney and Beatrice Webb, *The History of Trade Unionism* [new impression] (London: 1950 Longmans, Green and Co.)

¹⁶⁸ Chris Wrigley citing C.P. Scott (unpublished diary, 7 Jan 1918) in 'Trade unions and politics in the first world war' in Pimlott and Cook (eds) *Trade Unionism in British Politics: the first 250 years* (UK: 1995 Longman Group), p. 82

trade union movements, the first world war and international diplomacy, a vast amount of secondary literature was available which made the process of narrowing them down for this review difficult (especially given space considerations). While working with such a wide variety of sources proved complicated at times, it was ultimately very rewarding. Memoirs that recast events and aim to redress historical grievances can naturally be problematic, and while contemporary witness testimonies may add anecdotal and narrative value they often require qualification via primary sources. It is hoped that the project benefits from an array of older and newer, British and American, interpretations of themes, events, outcomes and implications.

The earlier writings and testimonies about the ILO and its creation primarily supported the Whig / Imperialist narrative, and probably also gave Barnes ample credit for his work towards its conception because it was fairly recent. Works through the mid-twentieth century exhibited a realist turn, followed by a revisionist, then a critical analysis turn. Studies of the Labour Party increasingly lost interest in Barnes as a topic for discussion as writers explored its search for identity: Ralph Miliband's *Parliamentary Socialism* (1962) was a prototypical example of left-wing writing aimed at returning the Party to its original purpose, written during the 'crisis' of Hugh Gaitskell's¹⁶⁹ modernisation efforts and attempt to revise Clause IV of the 1918 Party Constitution.¹⁷⁰ Although not a history, early ILP and LRC figures like Henderson, Kier Hardie, R J Clynes, and Ramsay MacDonald are elevated by Miliband. This trend escalated through to the early nineties as the Party continually struggled with many

¹⁶⁹ Hugh Gaitskell (1906-1963), Leader of the Labour Party, 1955-63; see appendices.

¹⁷⁰ *Report of the Annual Conference* 1959, p. 12; also *Report of the Annual Conference* 1918, App.1, p.140: 'To secure for the workers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their industry and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of production, distribution, and exchange, and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry or service.'

challenges, external and interneccine, and leaders who were unable to return the Party to 'electability.'¹⁷¹ Once 'New Labour' was introduced as the corporatist, middle-way forward for the Party from 1997, Barnes came somewhat back into fashion, perceived as a pragmatic, practical moderate: a revolutionary-turned-good. His temporary resurgence in the literature came only after the Labour Party itself experienced a decided 'swing to the right'.¹⁷²

¹⁷¹ See publications c. Labour's 'wilderness years', 1979-1997 e.g: Coates, *The Labour Party and the Struggle for Socialism* (1975); Hodgson, *Labour at the Crossroads* (1981); Kogan and Kogan, *The Battle for the Labour Party* (1982); Hinton, *Labour and Socialism: A History of the British Labour Movement, 1867-1974* (1983); Cronin, *Labour and Society in Britain, 1918-1979* (1984) ; G. Foote, *The Labour Party's Political Thought: a history* (1985); Seyd, *The Rise and Fall of the Labour Left* (1987), Heffernan and Marqusee, *Defeat from the Jaws of Victory* (1992), et al.

¹⁷² As in, e.g., *Men Who Made Labour: The PLP of 1906* (2006), op cit., and *The Labour Party, a centenary history* (2000), op cit., among other named works published after Tony Blair took office.

1 Introducing George N. Barnes, MP

Early Life and Religious Influences

Barnes' relative obscurity in the historiography misses an opportunity to provide essential insights into how progressive social and political ideas advanced, and at times clashed, in the struggle to keep pace with rapid industrialisation. Barnes stood amidst the transition from the nineteenth century to the twentieth. An examination of his early life and influences provides the background essential for understanding that, despite being a somewhat contentious Labour figure, he was superbly qualified for dealing with the challenges presented by the Peace Conference, ultimately securing acceptance of the Labour Convention and the Labour Charter into the Treaty of Versailles. This chapter often refers to Barnes' 1923 memoir to assist understanding of influences upon his politics and policies, drawing also from other observers' insights where applicable.

George Nicoll Barnes was born in 1859 and reared among poor manual workers in the low-lying 'bog' of Lochee, in western Dundee. He wrote that he 'was born into that class for which Abe Lincoln said the Lord must have had a special liking, since he made so many of them.'¹ His desire to improve the welfare of others stemmed from 'seeing poverty and plenty' there,² and at the age of seventy-four he vividly recalled the pig sties and animals being slaughtered near his home.³ Barnes' mother was from Strathclyde, the daughter of a machinist and screw maker, and his father was a mechanic of Yorkshire descent, a background described elsewhere as 'petit

¹ Barnes, *FWWC*, p.1

² Barnes in *Wedgwood*, p.26

³ Dundee, Perth and Forfar *People's Journal*, 7.1.33

bourgeois.’⁴ Barnes claimed his father became a Tory because the neighbours were mostly Liberals, recalling his old man ‘dearly loved disputation, and was inclined always to be in the minority... the kind that generally gathers no gear in the world.’⁵ Barnes inherited his father’s stubborn nature which helped or hindered him in equal measure during his career, but he cherished the open expression of ideas, recalling ‘I used to relish in the rough and tumble of the industrial as well as of the old political field, as it was common in my younger and more combative days.’⁶

The family moved often, following work between Dundee, the Wirral and eventually London in 1867, then back to Scotland again by 1872. Barnes only experienced Anglican day-schooling for a few years, at a two-mile walk from their home in Enfield, North London. He was a ‘poor scholar’, his irregular attendance sometimes earning him ‘a whacking.’ Barnes disagreed with the view that church schools served to merely indoctrinate followers, believing the churches showed a great community example by fulfilling an essential need not met elsewhere.⁷

Although he never made a specific declaration of his religious commitment, Barnes was raised in an Episcopalian household. He and his father attended the sermons of the popular, controversial Baptist Charles Spurgeon⁸ at South London’s Metropolitan Tabernacle. Spurgeon spoke conversationally from a small platform behind a rail, pacing the room instead of preaching from a pulpit, which impressed

⁴ Knox, *Leaders*, p.74

⁵ Barnes, *FWWC*, pp.1-2

⁶ *Ibid*, p.62

⁷ *Ibid*, pp.2-3

⁸ Charles Haddon Spurgeon, (1834–1892), Baptist preacher, religious writer; started out an Anti-Catholic missionary but converted to Methodism in 1850. His Congregationalist Ministry placed ‘emphasis on personal experience’; he was ‘caricatured and condemned for vulgarity, sensationalism, and irreverence.’ Other fans included Lord Shaftesbury, Gladstone, and U S President James Garfield.
< <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/26187>>

Barnes more than his ‘distinctive theology’ which he never understood.⁹ A Christian ethos was important to Barnes, and he became a Congregationalist affiliated with the Browning Settlement in Walworth, a deeply impoverished south London area. He frequently quoted scripture and used biblical references often to make dramatic points, evoking the language of Christian Socialism which held that materialism was a false ideal, a belief shared by many of his early Labour contemporaries.¹⁰

His formal education as a maintenance engineer was limited to mechanical drawing and some lessons in drafting Barnes entered the factory at eleven and worked happily alongside his father in Lambeth for two years, receiving his practical training during the ‘hey-day’ of London engineering. Strolling the Thames embankment he would look across to the Houses of Parliament which seemed ‘something quite outside the world’ he had been born into.¹¹ He spent the years 1872-7 back in Dundee in apprenticeship at Parker’s foundry, with occasional training sessions, learning the new engineering methods. He befriended craft union members and whalers around the docks who tremendously impressed him with their graft and ability to withstand hardship.¹² But London had already given him aspirations, and he missed ‘its immensity, its freedom from parochialism, its tragic but splendid contrasts.’¹³

Always interested in public affairs, Barnes’ first political meeting as a teenager was a speech on social reform delivered by the Liberal MP Edward Jenkins at Parker’s factory gates. Barnes saw Jenkins as ‘some sort of super man’, but after he crossed the

⁹ Barnes, *FWWC*, pp.9-10

¹⁰ ILP tracts on Christianity and Socialism c. 1850s-1930s in the ILP collection at the LSE include the ‘Tracts on Christian Socialism’ series, and associated works (ILP collection at British Library of Political and Economic Science @ LSE)

¹¹ Barnes, *FWWC*, pp.7-9

¹² Ibid, pp.12-16

¹³ Ibid, p.11

floor to run as a Tory Barnes said ‘Parliament swallowed him up as it has swallowed many more of us who have had some conceit of ourselves before going there.’¹⁴ He eventually found paid work in the Barrow-in-Furness shipyards in Cumbria, during the time before collective agreements when even young, fit workers could die under the strain from overtime.¹⁵ He yearned for change, bought a holiday ticket to London with a friend who soon disappeared, and stayed there from 1879.¹⁶

He arrived in London in time to face the great economic depression and a most bleak winter. Penniless, Barnes’ trudged all over London in frigid weather having ‘assumed the role of an Ishmael’, desperate for work along with many thousands of others. He felt the advent of Labour Exchanges in the 1870s foreshadowed ‘a better organisation of industry’, giving out-of-work people access to vital human contact, while making them visible, their legion impossible to ignore. He wrote in 1923 that the Exchanges (and later, the dole) were ‘the outward and visible signs of an inward and spiritual grace moving the community in the right direction... the indications of a desire to solve.’¹⁷

Once the economy recovered, industrial engineering boomed and London was again ‘a hive of industry.’¹⁸ Barnes was particularly amazed by the pace of the construction of the Albert Docks in Millwall. He worked all over, becoming a draughtsman at Woolwich Arsenal and taking training in machine construction and drawing.¹⁹ Barnes seemed quite familiar with the London music halls near his home in Clerkenwell, joking that they appealed to his Scotch mind because they were so

¹⁴ Ibid, pp.17-8

¹⁵ Ibid, pp.21-2

¹⁶ Ibid, p.21

¹⁷ Ibid, pp.28-9

¹⁸ Ibid, p.29

¹⁹ Ibid, p.33

cheap.²⁰ He was apparently not in the temperance movement, nor tee-total like Arthur Henderson, a Wesleyan Methodist, or Willie Adamson, the Baptist leader of the Fife Miners.²¹

Trade Unionism, Socialism and Politics

The existing historiography does not analyse Barnes' formative political years in ways that help us to understand his mindset in the war years and beyond, nor have the roots of the non-dogmatic, Communitarian socialism that inspired his avowed anti-Bolshevism been adequately dealt with. His ideology, as discussed in the introduction, has been perceived as a swing to the right, if not a hard break, but it is more the continuation of a set of fundamentally consistent beliefs. The advent of socialism in Britain was an awakening, as it strengthened his resolve that social and industrial reform was achievable; a belief shared by the founders of the ILP and LRC. He also perceived an impractical, 'fanatical' adoption of socialist rhetoric and a divisive, militant approach within the movement, and his rejection of this was among the tensions that characterised his public life.

Barnes' personal and political lives took root in Fulham in 1882, where he married, started a family, and became actively involved in labour politics and trade union propaganda.²² The tempestuous years to 1900 saw the formation of the Labour Representation Committee (LRC) as the craft unions grew in power, and employer's groups like the Engineering Employers' Federation (EEF) organised against this 'new unionism'. Barnes spoke at ASE gatherings across London and soon joined their powerful London Committee. He recalled that labour advocacy required sacrifices:

²⁰ Ibid, p.31

²¹ Knox, *Leaders*, p.102, citing Knox, *Scottish Labour Leaders 1918-39* (Edinburgh: 1984 Mainstream), p.58; Adamson founded the Dunfermline Temperance Council.

²² Barnes, *FWWC*, p.35

working all day and meeting nightly, and ‘deprivation of home comforts and neglect of duties left to harassed wives.’²³ He met John Burns,²⁴ who was ‘somewhat’ violent, but ‘there had been a good deal in his experiences to make him so... he had to pay the penalty usually then meted out to those who pled Labour’s cause.’²⁵ Barnes also met Tom Mann,²⁶ and became his secretary during his 1890 campaign to become ASE General Secretary. Barnes became a well-known ASE figure beyond the local ranks in every English-speaking country, plus Spain and France.²⁷

The ‘machine question’ underpinned Barnes’ entry into socialism. He recalled it was ‘a never-ending source of trouble’ stoking revolt throughout the engineering trade.²⁸ He observed that while employers took advantage of cost-saving automation to the workers’ great detriment, it also engendered competition between skilled and unskilled workers in the same shops which was equally dangerous. The ‘new unionism’ expressed impatience with a supine trade union leadership, too reliant on the State, which took decisions playing ‘directly into the hands of the capitalist exploiter.’²⁹ Distrust grew between the local Shop Stewards and a remote Executive Council. Barnes was an ASE delegate to the crucial 1892 Leeds conference which gave District Committees the power to determine local rules, allowing the ASE Executive to fund political candidates.^{30,31}

Barnes embraced the communitarian aspect of socialism but not class war.

Initially this stemmed from his reaction to revolutionary propaganda. Although

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ John Burns (1858-1943), prominent SDF propagandist and leader of London’s unemployed; see appendices.

²⁵ Barnes, *FWWC*, p.35

²⁶ Thomas Mann (1856-1941), ASE member c. 1881; see appendices.

²⁷ Barnes, *FWWC*, p.37

²⁸ Ibid, p.46

²⁹ Mann in Jefferys, *Engineers*, p.112

³⁰ Ibid, p.137

³¹ Barnes, *FWWC*, pp.37-8

influenced by the powerful speeches of the Socialist League's Harry Johnson,³² he believed that most of the 'academic agitators'³³ were condescending to the men, creating distrust and suspicion between workers: the very atomisation they professed to oppose. Barnes described his final rally at the Battersea Branch of the SDF, where he was 'battered by the rhetoric of Marx and Engels for several hours': -

...so belaboured with words about exploitation, proletariat, bourgeois and others of learned length and thundering sound just then imported from Germany, that I believe I retired sore all over, and determined to go to no more Social Democratic Federation branches. And I never have.³⁴

Organisations like Hyndman's Social Democratic Foundation ('SDF') expanded and included Burns, Mann and other 'outstanding figures in the Labour ranks.'³⁵ Barnes never officially joined but regularly attended Socialist League meetings. He believed that class-war rhetoric reduced the worker to a self-defeating, materialistic condition, separating him from the rest of society and threatening the fibre of the community.

Barnes was coy about his involvement in the 'Bloody Sunday' riot in Trafalgar Square, November 1887,³⁶ blaming the descent into violence on 'the exuberance of ignorant ardour.'³⁷ He claimed he and his Fulham contingent were ambushed and he was badly trampled by a constable's horse, leaving him with a slightly deformed foot: 'We were gaily marching along to the strains of our antiquated instruments... when lo... in an instant there was a cracking on skulls and a scattering of feet.'³⁸ In retrospect he

³² Bio unavailable at time of writing.

³³ A term Barnes returned to in his September 1919 address '*The Perils of Materialism to the Workers*', op cit., p.13

³⁴ Barnes, *FWWC*, p.42

³⁵ Ibid, p.38; Henry Mayers Hyndman (1842-1941), well-educated, financially comfortable socialist leader and author; see appendices.

³⁶ The debacle is depicted in depth in C. Bloom, *Violent London: 2000 Years of Riots, Rebels and Revolts* (London: 2003 Palgrave Macmillan), pp.222-4

³⁷ Barnes, *FWWC*, pp.40-41

³⁸ Ibid.

cited the 1889 Dock Strike³⁹ as an important example of extra-parliamentary action, backed by public support, effecting positive change. Those ‘feverish’ days did lead to improvements to housing and some reform of the sweated trades, crucially shining greater light on social and industrial inequalities.⁴⁰ Barnes referred to the new unionism as ‘a gingering up of the old unionism, either for revolutionary or parliamentary purposes’, preferring the latter, while ‘Some, muddle headedly, advocated both.’⁴¹

Barnes’ faith in constitutional processes and the power of the democratic mandate grew stronger as moderate trade unionists supported Parliamentary representation over direct action. In 1889, Barnes joined the ASE Executive and in 1892 became its Assistant Secretary. His first bid for the General Secretaryship in 1895 failed when he stood on a policy of direct Parliamentary representation despite the support of prominent figures like Mann. However the August 1896 Clyde-Belfast dispute tipped things in his favour and Barnes, an ILP man, became ASE General Secretary that year, amassing 8,000 votes over the runner-up.⁴² This denoted a marked change in the ASE’s approach while socialists were taking on positions of power in the trade unions. Barnes pushed the idea of LRC affiliation to the ASE Executive yet they resisted in 1901, deciding against funding ASE members running for Parliament.⁴³ They came around in 1902 when the repercussions of the Taff-Vale⁴⁴ verdict were

³⁹ Originating in London’s West India docks, led by Ben Tillett (see appendices), it ran for 5 weeks and by the end many dockers’ families were near starvation, seen as a turning point for the unskilled labour by creating the General Labourers’ Union. ‘By 1890 there were about 200,000 ‘new unionists’... who could not previously afford to join the older, more exclusive organisations.’ *The Great Dock Strike of 1889* (London: 2015 Unite Education) p.54

⁴⁰ Barnes, *FWWC*, p.43

⁴¹ Ibid, p.38

⁴² Marshall, *Men*, p.24

⁴³ Ibid, p.25

⁴⁴ The House of Lords awarded £23,000 to the Taff Vale railway company, payable by the Amalg. Soc. of Railway Servants, for the unofficial strike of 1901; the subsequent Trades Dispute Act (1906) ruled that

becoming apparent.⁴⁵ Barnes was observed as being more astute than his union colleagues about the threat that Taff-Vale presented to collective bargaining and in recognising the need for direct political representation.⁴⁶

Barnes' leadership of the ASE to 1908 has received attention in studies of trade unionism, as discussed in the introduction.⁴⁷ For this study it is important to acknowledge that Barnes was unable to bridge the gaps created by the ASE's 1892 Constitution between resentful workers, 'disobedient' local officials and a remote Executive Council during several potent actions.⁴⁸ Acrimony on the militant Clyde intensified, and the rift with the left crystallised once Barnes became MP for Glasgow Hutchestown (Blackfriars) in 1906. In 1908 he resigned as ASE General Secretary in frustration after the Tyneside men refused a settlement endorsed by the Executive (negotiated with the assistance of Lloyd George, then Chancellor of the Exchequer).⁴⁹ Barnes urged the district council to accept what he felt was a good deal, but after several months the men returned to work badly defeated, without gaining a settlement or the community's confidence. He received no support from his Executive Council colleagues during the schism, recalling that they 'were intimidated by, and surrendered to, a section of men and I declined to be a party to the surrender... The new methods of

unions were not accountable for damages incurred while striking.

⁴⁵ Marshall, *Men*, p.25

⁴⁶ Nield, *DLB*, p.9; Head, *Radicals*, p.64

⁴⁷ See Jefferys, *Engineers*, op cit., Clegg et al *History of British Trade Unions since 1889* (1964), Fraser *History of British Trade Unionism, 1700-1998* (1999).

⁴⁸ Jefferys, *Engineers*, pp.167-9

⁴⁹ In brief, the Clyde set a trend in 1903 of refusing wage cuts other districts had accepted, staying on strike being fined and losing their strike benefit payment; in 1906 and 1907 the Manchester and Erith District Committees followed suit. Barnes saw an incremental weakening of the Executive Council who would not stand up to the district leaders he felt were giving the men bad advice owing to their militant outlook. Jefferys observed the Executive's action deprived the ASE of 'one of the most efficient and able secretaries since William Allan' (p.169).

control – or lack of it – had no attraction for me.’⁵⁰ He was left free to focus on his Parliamentary activities.

Since 1885 Barnes had been working with other socialists including Keir Hardie,⁵¹ Burns, Mann, Robert Smillie⁵² and Ben Tillett,⁵³ who formed the ILP in 1893. Barnes became an ILP leading light, and the Party had 35,000 members when he stood (unsuccessfully) as its candidate for Rochdale in 1895.⁵⁴ The ILP was the only ‘distinctively socialist’ society he joined, but he left them at the outset of the war in 1914 over their pacifist position, believing Britain had a responsibility to fight German autocracy. Barnes was an important figure during the February 1900 Conference that inaugurated the Labour Representation Committee (LRC). Ten days before he wrote in the *Labour Leader* that it had to be a ‘classless’ political party to achieve its aims: -

Labour ...must take *its* place as a distinct factor in Parliamentary life ‘ere the benefits of Parliament can be diffused evenly and justly throughout the community. The Conference ...should keep this steadily in view... Perfectionist propaganda and bewildering programmes should be resolutely tabooed. He will best contribute to the awakening of Labour who leaves the ‘isms’ on the door steps...⁵⁵

He moved at the conference that the LRC should be diverse, composed of ‘men sympathetic with the aims of the Labour movement, and whose candidatures are promoted by one or more of the organised movements represented at the conference.’⁵⁶ John Burns’ rousing speech in support declared that limiting membership to the working classes would be ‘narrow, intolerant, and exclusive.’⁵⁷ Barnes’ motion was

⁵⁰ Barnes, *FWWC*, pp.56-7

⁵¹ (James) Keir Hardie (1856-1915) see appendices.

⁵² Robert Smillie (1857-1940) see appendices.

⁵³ Benjamin Tillett (1860-1943) see appendices.

⁵⁴ Marshall, *Men*, p.25; all ILP candidates lost.

⁵⁵ Barnes, *FWWC*, p.59, his emphasis

⁵⁶ *Times*, 28.2.1900

⁵⁷ Ibid

approved by 102 votes to three,⁵⁸ determining that candidates of any party with a trade union's support could stand for Labour. Philip Snowden viewed this as an important rejection of sectional interests, contrary to the SDF's 'tactless' vision for the LRC which was the mere 'recognition of the class war with Socialism as its ultimate aim.'⁵⁹ The SDF left the LRC over this decided difference in approach.

Barnes campaigned tirelessly for Old Age Pensions from 1896, urging it as a priority until the passing of the Old Age Pensions Act (1908). The ASE pioneered trade union superannuation schemes and old age pensions became a cornerstone of Liberal reform, along with national insurance.⁶⁰ Barnes chaired the National Committee of Organised Labour for Old Age Pensions (NCOL) from 1902 which included many trades and unions including the National Union of Women Workers. Margaret Bondfield⁶¹ was also an NCOL Secretary as was F. Herbert Stead⁶² of the Congregationalist Browning Settlement, who founded NCOL with Barnes.⁶³ Barnes made the topic central to his maiden Commons speech in 1906 and delivered a corresponding summer lecture at Oxford.⁶⁴ His prominence across the country and in the House of Commons led people to say that 'his name and old age pensions were inseparable.'⁶⁵ Barnes also became affiliated with the Cooperative Society, becoming

⁵⁸ Ibid

⁵⁹ Snowden, op cit., p.91

⁶⁰ See Pat Thane, *Old Age in English History: Past Experiences, Present Issue* (OUP 2000), chapters 9-11 et al for a thorough examination.

⁶¹ Margaret Brace Bondfield (1873-1953); see appendices.: in 1902 she also represented the Shop Assistants.

⁶² Francis Herbert Stead (1857-1928), Congregationalist Minister, publisher and social reformer; see appendices.

⁶³ Barnes wrote the introduction to Stead's *How Old Age Pensions Came to Be* (London: 1909 Methuen)

⁶⁴ Barnes, *Old Age Pensions: the case plainly stated* (London: 1907 Co-operative printing society)

⁶⁵ Jefferys, *Engineers*, p.133

Chairman of the London branch in 1902 and remaining an active member until his death.⁶⁶

Member of Parliament and Biographer

In 1905 Barnes was encouraged by Hardie to challenge Andrew Bonar Law⁶⁷ for his Glasgow seat and became one of the twenty-nine Labour Party members to enter the House of Commons in 1906.⁶⁸ Barnes recounted that those days were strenuous for trade unionist MPs who ‘had irons in other fires’,⁶⁹ yet they passed the Trade Disputes Act (1906) which reversed the worst effects of Taff-Vale.⁷⁰ Through to 1910, Barnes helped pass reform bills on compensation for industrial accidents, reduction of miners’ working hours and restrictions on white phosphorous in match-making.⁷¹ His memoir detailed numerous Liberal Government measures Labour was ‘in sympathy’ with, not least Lloyd George’s 1909 Budget.⁷²

Barnes was a prolific writer before and after entering Parliament, contributing to newspapers, engineering journals and technical reports as the bibliography indicates. MPs were unpaid until 1911 so Barnes, to raise money, wrote a number of ILP biographical pamphlets after leaving his salaried ASE position, choosing Henry George, Karl Marx, and Robert Burns as subjects.⁷³ He wrote about the men who inspired him in lively fashion, emphasising their humanity, and the practicality and inherent morality of their philosophies. A summary follows because the pamphlets offer insight into the shaping of his socio-political beliefs and policies. The appendices

⁶⁶ *The History of the Co-operative Printing Society 1869-1919* (Manchester: 1920 CPS), p.223

⁶⁷ Andrew Bonar Law (1858–1923) Conservative Party leader and PM, 1922, see appendices..

⁶⁸ Head, *Radicals*, p.65

⁶⁹ Barnes, *FWWC*, p.84

⁷⁰ TPA HL/PO/PU/1/1906/6E7c47, *Trade Disputes Act*, c. 47 (1906)

⁷¹ Head, *Radicals*, p.65

⁷² Barnes, *FWWC*, p.85

⁷³ Focussing on some popular figures in Labour history may have also been an attempt at redemption with the working class left.

contain short biographies of Barnes' subjects, and several further excerpts that denote the reverence with which Barnes approached them.

Henry George

Following the historical election of 1906, Barnes declared that Henry George's *Progress and Poverty*⁷⁴ was the primary inspiration behind 'the beginning of his fight' for social justice.^{75,76} George was very popular among progressive Liberal politicians as well as British and Irish socialists. In *Henry George*, Barnes pithily summarised George's policies, admiring his proposals to 'tax land values to extinction, or till economic rent was swallowed up, excepting only such as amount as would compensate landlords for collecting, and he argued that thereby industry would be freed from taxes, wages increased, poverty abolished, and a state of society brought about from which would emerge a free people, controlling affairs on lines of free and voluntary co-operation.'⁷⁷

Barnes' sympathies with George were several, including Scottish lineage, early entry into work, and 'The Irish Question' which occupied great space in the hearts and minds of both men. The large Irish Catholic vote in Barnes' Glasgow constituency and his support of Home Rule (and Old Age Pensions) was primarily responsible for his holding the seat until retirement in 1922, despite his problems with the Clyde men.

Barnes borrowed much text from the biography of George written by his son,⁷⁸ yet his

⁷⁴ Henry George (1839-1897), *Poverty and Progress* [25 Anniversary Edition; originally printed in 1879] (New York, USA: 1916 Doubleday, Page & Co); full original title was *Progress and Poverty: An Inquiry into the Cause of Industrial Depressions and of Increase of Want with Increase of Wealth: The Remedy*.

⁷⁵ *Review of Reviews* (33: 1906), pp.571-2

⁷⁶ Published by F Herbert Stead's cousin, W T Stead (1849-1912); Newspaper editor and investigative journalism pioneer attributed with creating the 'new journalism' and first to hire female writers was himself a Congregationalist. Stead perished on the Titanic in 1912.

⁷⁷ Barnes, *Henry George*, p.1

⁷⁸ Henry George, Jr. *The Life of Henry George* (New York: 1904 Doubleday, Page)

own unique voice came through and the tremendous impression ‘The Prophet of San Francisco’ made on Barnes was undeniable.

Robert Burns

Barnes also said in 1906 that the poetry of Robert Burns, and ‘the various Utopias’, particularly William Morris’ *News from Nowhere*⁷⁹ further shaped him, admitting ‘I have been, and am still, a bit of a dreamer, and this perhaps accounts for my taste.’⁸⁰ In *Robert Burns*, Barnes was particularly tender in considering how his fellow Scot’s eighteenth-century poetry shone a light on unacceptable social conditions. Burns was ‘the champion as well as the songster of humanity. With unerring instinct he could see that there was something radically wrong in a state of society which condemned the many to a state of penurious toil that the few might revel in luxurious idleness.’ Burns, Barnes wrote, had ‘anticipated economic thought by a hundred years’ although ‘he probably never read a text-book of economics in his life.’⁸¹ Burns viewed the sanctimoniously religious, hypocritical “unco’ guid”⁸² the same way Barnes viewed militants who professed salvation but led the workers astray.

He was touched by Burns’ depiction of the destitute, broken man who questioned why a better life was dangled just beyond reach.⁸³ Barnes concluded the tract sentimentally, saying Burns (who suffered from deep depression) ‘was a simple child of nature whose generous thoughts welled up from the fullness of his heart. As counsel for poor mortals he was supreme, his simple reflections as well as homely

⁷⁹ William Morris (1834-1896) textile designer, poet, novelist, translator, and visionary socialist/activist et al; see appendices.

⁸⁰ *Review of Reviews*, p.571

⁸¹ Barnes, *Robert Burns*, p.9

⁸² The ‘Unco’ Guid’ (1786) aka The Rigidly Righteous.

⁸³ See excerpt from ‘Man Was Made To Mourn: A Dirge (1784)’ in appendices.

pathos, all proclaiming and hastening a good time coming when the humble shall inherit the earth.’⁸⁴

Karl Marx

Karl Marx was the most deeply scrutinising of Barnes’ three 1909 pamphlets. He provided a critical analysis of the *Communist Manifesto* (1848) arguing that Marx was simply misunderstood by many socialists and implied that others twisted his words to further their individualistic agendas. Barnes respected Marx’s scientific approach to economic innovation and applauded the practicality of historical materialism against the ‘utopian’ ideas saturating the labour movement; although a self-proclaimed socialist, Barnes believed that the worker’s immediate plight did not allow for dreaming about a distant utopia, a conviction that became more deeply embedded over time. Marx’s love of humanity was illuminated as Barnes countered popular impressions of a cold, philosophical statistician. He argued that the core of Marx’s theories, and the key to socialism’s success, was inclusivity, not exclusion, which was the true inspiration for class-consciousness as Barnes saw it: -

He knew that Socialism could be achieved only through and by the people as it ceased to be sectarian; that is why he shared in movements intended to rouse the workers and to induce them to take a distinctive part in public affairs... That the workers of the world are now getting on their political legs, that Labour is now getting new hope and a greater respect for itself, and that society is consciously shaping itself towards unity and order are due very largely to Karl Marx.⁸⁵

Robert Owen

Concluding his biographical works, at the age of seventy Barnes delivered a 1928 lecture on the *Life and Work of Robert Owen* at King’s College London which the

⁸⁴ Barnes, *Robert Burns*, p.12

⁸⁵ Barnes, *Karl Marx*, p.21

Co-operative Printing Society later published.⁸⁶ Barnes summarised ‘The Owenite Philosophy’ of life, denoting Owen’s aversions to religious creeds as well as politics.⁸⁷ Barnes stressed how the founder of the New Lanark system of Co-operativism disregarded divisive doctrines and any class system (although Owen was born into a comfortable caste himself). Owen ‘believed in paternal government, and an organised society based on paternal principles which should provide for moral as well as material needs’ and that ‘individual character could be formed on altruistic lines, and that a communistic society would arise as a result.’ Barnes respected Owen for being far ahead of his time, a pioneer who lived as he preached regardless of how he might have been perceived: -

...they regarded him, and described him, as a political lunatic. And perhaps he was. As a politician he was a failure. But he was one of those glorious failures who make straight roads for those who come after him.⁸⁸

Perhaps what Barnes most respected about ‘the Newtown Utopian’ was his belief in the power of man over machine, and his proven method of creating a sustainable community under local control. The New Lanark experiment was the physical manifestation of a benevolent doctrine, the ‘practical’ application of socialism reorganising industrial society for the better.

Barnes took inspiration from these men primarily because of their love of mankind. Henry George’s economic policies envisioned a kinder, more cooperative society. Robert Burns stressed that brotherhood and solidarity was the key to a better

⁸⁶ Fred Hall, *The History of the Co-operative Printing Society, 1869-1919 (Jubilee Edition)*, Manchester: 1920 Co-operative Printing Society) p.195,223; written while Barnes and Bowerman were among the British delegates to the first International Labour Conference in Washington, Oct-November 1919, something mentioned several times in the publication.

⁸⁷ Barnes, *Life and Work of Robert Owen* (henceforth *Robert Owen*); Owen became a zealous convert to spiritualism towards the end of his life.

⁸⁸ Barnes, *Robert Owen*, p.12

world. Labour's rise had proven all that Marx had discussed, and Barnes felt the next phase of capitalism was due to take root. Robert Owen had provided the blueprint for labour's reorganisation through practical means. All were underpinned by deep convictions and a moral objective, and it was immaterial whether a socialist or Christian 'utopia' dawned upon the horizon.

Chairman of the Labour Party

Barnes has received harsh criticism regarding his stint as Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP) Chairman from 1910-11 under the rotating leadership system. Ramsay MacDonald⁸⁹ was reluctant to Chair the fledgling Party himself in 1910, preferring to hold the whip as Secretary before succeeding Barnes. MacDonald reportedly said that by June 1910 Barnes' chairmanship was 'a sad failure... He has no energy and no grasp of policy. Our action in the House is consequently feeble, and this has a very bad effect outside'⁹⁰ Barnes had criticised his colleagues for their 'slackness, timidity and failure to pressurise the Government', which Henderson complained opened the Party up to criticism in the Tory press.⁹¹ Henderson complained to MacDonald that he had 'proved a conspicuous failure and now seeks to blame the Party for all the failures and blunders of leadership.'⁹²

Barnes was reportedly ill during the short 1910-11 Parliament, something his memoir neglects to mention.⁹³ He recalled that his two most pressing issues as Leader were Ireland and the King's Civil List, the latter putting him in conflict with Lloyd

⁸⁹ (James) Ramsay MacDonald (1866-1937); First Labour Prime Minister, served twice 1924 (as PM and Foreign Secretary) and 1929-35 (from 1931 as head of a coalition Government; see appendices.

⁹⁰ David Marquand, *Ramsay MacDonald* (London: 1977 Jonathan Cape).
p.127, JRM diary for 11.6.1910

⁹¹ Chris Wrigley, *Arthur Henderson* (Cardiff: 1990 GPC Books), p.58

⁹² F.M Leventhal, *Arthur Henderson* (Manchester: 1989 Manchester University Press), p.35

⁹³ Nield, *DLB*, p.10; Marshall, *Men*, p.26

George over nationalising the Duchies of Cornwall and Lancaster. Barnes believed that the Royal Family should retain ‘ample provision’ through ‘the bounty of Parliament’, but that, echoing Henry George, they should not receive vast sums of money from private property. It was noted that Barnes’ lacklustre leadership ensured that MacDonald stepped in as a fine orator who was also adept at organisation and strategy, with a highly coherent ideology that led Labour thinking at the time.⁹⁴

Barnes and MacDonald, however, shared the belief that salaried Labour MPs were being distracted from their parliamentary duties by spending time on propaganda for women’s suffrage,⁹⁵ with Barnes reportedly displaying ‘impatience and dissatisfaction’ with the men.⁹⁶ In his memoir he complained of how Hardie’s repeated efforts to defend members of the Women’s Social and Political Union (WSPU) were taken for granted.⁹⁷ Although the Labour Party and the moderate NUWSS began to harmonise somewhat after the 1911 Party conference,⁹⁸ Barnes recalled the ‘trying time’ Labour had in the Houses of Commons trying to reverse the Osborne Judgement⁹⁹ and pass the National Insurance Act¹⁰⁰ while the radical WSPU in 1910 were ‘on the rampage... giving no quarter and asking none... making war upon us, as upon other political parties.’¹⁰¹ He cited the case of George Lansbury who lost his

⁹⁴ Andrew Thorpe, *A History of the British Labour Party* (3rd ed) [Henceforth *Labour Party*](Basingstoke: 2008 Palgrave Macmillan), p.28; The middle-class MacDonald was independently funded through his marriage to Margaret Ethel Gladstone, which relieved the new, working class party of some financial stress, and their Lincoln’s Inn Fields home was also a centre for world labour activists.

⁹⁵ Marshall, *Men*, p.26

⁹⁶ Head, *Radicals*, p.65

⁹⁷ Barnes recalled women’s poor treatment of Hardie in *FWWC* pp.97-8, and speaks of the ‘much-maligned’ Hardie extensively, pp. 98-101

⁹⁸ The Conference determined in response to the Government’s franchise reform bill neglecting to include women’s suffrage that such legislation was unacceptable; the NUWSS began funding Labour men when there were no pro-suffrage candidates standing in by-elections; Thorpe, *Labour Party*, pp.30-1

⁹⁹ The Act prevented the unions from levying their members to fund candidates.

¹⁰⁰ Barnes, *FWWC*, pp.101-3

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, p.101

Poplar seat after standing for re-election as the women's candidate.¹⁰² Although Barnes and his sympathisers thought support for women's suffrage confused MP's priorities, they might have realised that women would support Labour's proposed reforms of education, health, housing and social security.

The Great War

Barnes' war record has provoked criticism, but on the whole it reflected the confusion and uncertainty brought on by the unexpected horrors and hardship of total war.

...It was a fight for life on the part of France and Belgium, and if we had kept out we should have been faced with a fight for life later on.¹⁰³

Barnes emphasised that the war was against German autocracy and the Kaiser, not Germany's people.¹⁰⁴ He campaigned long and hard to establish a league of democratic nations 'dedicated to the enforcement of international law' and maintaining peace for the future.¹⁰⁵ He was always a proponent of Germany's earliest entry into the League of Nations, but his initial uncertainty over its participation in the Washington Conference changed gradually and finally once the International Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU) threatened a boycott in August 1919, as discussed in the concluding chapter. Barnes' affinity for the Germans ran deep; his appreciation and admiration for German industrial methods deepened when he and Henderson surveyed its unemployment provisions together in 1908.¹⁰⁶ In June 1919 when reparations terms

¹⁰² Ibid, p.98

¹⁰³ Ibid, p.106

¹⁰⁴ Barnes clarified his feelings about German autocracy in an August 1918 Cambridge speech; TNA CAB/24/60/64; Philip Snowden recorded the ILP's lingering outrage over Barnes' remark to 'hang the Kaiser' during the 1918 Coalition campaign, *Autobiography*, p. 499,

¹⁰⁵ Head, *Radicals*, pp.65-6

¹⁰⁶ Barnes, with Arthur Henderson, *Unemployment in Germany. A report of an inquiry into the methods adopted in Germany for dealing with unemployment, presented to the Labour Party* (London: 1908 ILP);

were being debated, he toured the formerly occupied German areas with James T. Shotwell of the American delegation to see first-hand the war's effect on its people, also discussed in the Epilogue.^{107,108}

In 1915 Barnes was a member of the Asquith coalition with Lloyd George and Bonar Law, among others. Once the Government took complete control of the wartime direction of industry, the 1915 Munitions Act weakened trade union control by forbidding strikes and lockouts and initiating compulsory arbitration. As part of the Act's measures Barnes recruited mechanics from Canada and travelled to the French frontlines to release men for domestic munitions production. His support for the bill to conscript unmarried men underscored his resolve to achieve the war's final and decisive conclusion. The loss of his eldest son Henry on the battlefield at Loos¹⁰⁹ only reinforced his determination. Looking back he said that if anyone had understood 'the magnitude of the task' ahead, the Allies would have mobilised all of their forces from the outset, instead of in 'dribblets' after 'various makeshifts and evasions.'¹¹⁰

Barnes helped establish a working men's Savings Association to aid the war effort, and lobbied for pensions and allowances for volunteers' dependents.¹¹¹ He served on the conscientious objectors' appeal board, strongly supporting the pacifist's rights in genuine cases, while insisting that they aid the nation somehow.¹¹² He commented that even the Quaker community did their part, going into the battle zones

they ultimately determined that German's federated nature allowed unemployment measures to be more easily undertaken than they might be in Britain.

¹⁰⁷ James T. Shotwell (1874-1965); Canadian-born member of the American delegation to the Peace Conference, served on 'The Inquiry', President Wilson's historical materials study group; see appendices.

¹⁰⁸ TPA DLG F/4/3/22, 22.619

¹⁰⁹ Aka 'Dick', also active in social work through the Browning Settlement. Barnes, *FWWC* p.119

¹¹⁰ Barnes, *FWWC* pp.110-1

¹¹¹ Head, *Radicals*, p.65

¹¹² *Ibid*, pp.65-6

to tend to the wounded.¹¹³ Barnes respected those ‘individuals who feel impelled at all costs to render their obedience to an inner law rather than obey the secular arms when it comes to a question of the shedding of blood. They are possibly pioneers of a better world.’¹¹⁴

Barnes helped Lloyd George come to power in December 1916 over disillusion with Asquith’s performance as wartime premier, and was rewarded with one of the few Cabinet posts given to Labour MPs before forming their first Government. His loyalty to the Lloyd George coalition deepened as the division with the left fomented in the north-east and on the Clydeside in particular, where his ASE tenure and involvement with the Munitions Act had already created a divide. Barnes’ role as a Labour member of the coalition grew increasingly complicated as uncertainty and distrust over the Government’s direction of the war and industrial policy mounted.

The Lloyd George Coalition

The latter half of the war was characterised by vast discontent in the labour movement, owing largely to rising prices and rents. An unprecedented surge in bargaining power resulted from full employment, and the sense of national unity that Asquith, ‘the old captain’, was able to maintain was lost. Organised labour was central to Lloyd George’s command of the war effort, and at the outset he remarked that the Labour Party’s place in the wartime coalition was not ‘because they are suitable men, but because they have a large class who should have a voice in the government.’¹¹⁵ Barnes was integral to the Prime Minister’s effectiveness in resolving conflicts, continually asserting that along with satisfying the workers’ material and psychological

¹¹³ Barnes, *FWWC*, p.136

¹¹⁴ Barnes, *FWWC*, p.134

¹¹⁵ Riddell to Bonar Law, *Lord Riddell's Intimate Diary Of Peace Conference And After 1918-1923* (London: 1933 Golancz ltd), p.4

needs, restoring national unity was central to maintaining industrial peace. Barnes was an important, essential resource for the Prime Minister in gauging national and international working class sentiment on many issues. He withstood numerous challenges and controversies in the war cabinet which exceeded Lloyd George's expectations, and his role as Paris plenipotentiary and leader of the British delegation on the International Labour Commission was secured after the December 1918 General Election.

Labour's entry into the Lloyd George Coalition Government was conditional upon the creation of the Ministry of Labour ('MoL') the nationalisation of coal mining, and promises opposing universal industrial conscription.¹¹⁶ J.S. Middleton, Labour Party Secretary for forty years, observed that Barnes was 'largely responsible for the more enlightened policy that characterised that ministry.'¹¹⁷ Barnes formed and headed the new Ministry of Pensions. Before accepting the post he insisted upon the revision of the Royal Warrant for the Army: 1917 saw the introduction of an improved pensions and payment system for disabled servicemen,¹¹⁸ along with a state-funded programme for rehabilitating injured soldiers.¹¹⁹ As manpower shortages and munitions needs intensified, these advances were easily overlooked.

Barnes grew increasingly unpopular with swathes of labour through his support for conscription and dilution,¹²⁰ and the bitter split from the ASE was fresh enough for many engineers in the North East particularly to recall. The crippling May 1917

¹¹⁶ Thorpe, *Labour Party*, p.39

¹¹⁷ Middleton, *DNB*, p.42

¹¹⁸ Marshall, *Men*, p.27; Barnes, *FWWC* pp.14-15

¹¹⁹ Barnes, *FWWC* pp.15-16; he argued against the pension going towards men discharged as psychologically unfit because these 'veritable weeds' should not have been accepted in the first place; he later regretted this remark as recorded in HC Deb 06 March 1917 vol 91 c 256

¹²⁰ The replacement of skilled workers with an unskilled or semi-skilled workforce that including older men, women and the disabled; the Trade Unions accepted this upon certain conditions i.e., that it was only for the duration of the war, a point that became increasingly contentious amongst the workers.

engineering strikes laid bare the level of industrial unrest across the country, and stoked Governmental fears that left-wing revolt could devastate munitions production. Sympathetic strikes broke out across industry, driven by inactivity over high food prices, extensions to the Military Service Acts, the abolition of the Trade Card Scheme,¹²¹ and the introduction of dilution into private enterprise. David Shackleton's¹²² weekly press intelligence briefings to the Lloyd George Secretariat were alarming. The Labour press condemned profiteering, rampant high prices and poor food supplies as compulsory rationing for the working classes. News about Russia and the Provisional Government fired up the left's presses, and Socialist newspapers declared Britain's Imperialist ambitions went far beyond destroying German aggression. Even the mainstream newspapers were critical of Governmental secrecy and various departments' failure to provide information about changes to the Munitions Acts: even *The Times* demanded 'a fresh air policy and immediate ventilation of the facts connected with industrial unrest.'¹²³ Although Shackleton and Barnes both believed the revolutionary mindset was in the minority, it was vital to encourage moderate trade unionists by enlisting Labour MPs who represented trade union orthodoxy to speak.¹²⁴ Barnes, in accord with the MoL and other departments, was integral to the propaganda campaign to restore national unity, quell restiveness and prevent 'a purely unconstitutional and rebel movement' from overtaking the Shop

¹²¹ Introduced to protect skilled ASE men from conscription; later replaced by a list of 'protected occupations' to prevent skilled labour being called up before all suitable dilutees in less vital industries.

¹²² David James Shackleton (1863-1938); Third Labour Member of Parliament, general secretary of the Textile Factory Workers Association and chairman of the Trades Union Congress, 1906-09; Vice-chairman of the Labour Party, 1906-8; see appendices.

¹²³ TNA CAB 24 14 32, 'Report on the Labour Situation for the week ending May 23rd 1917'

¹²⁴ Ibid

Stewards.¹²⁵ He seized the opportunity to express his personal policies for industrial and social peace in an official capacity.

Home Rule for Industry

Barnes spoke at local working men's meetings, and wrote editorials for his constituency newspaper, making public his policy of 'home rule' for industry.¹²⁶ It was recorded elsewhere that the civil servant Harold Butler developed a Ministry of Labour policy of 'home rule for industry' in 1918, maintaining the 'impartiality of the state' in a drive to safeguard minimum standards, devolved from state control.¹²⁷ Barnes was probably its pioneer, having circulated his 'home rule' policy to the Ministry of Labour and the Cabinet months earlier. Barnes' War Cabinet memo of May 31st about the Shop Stewards Movement advocated that devolving some power from the Executive to 'responsible', moderate trade unionists would restore their sense of control and prevent militants from taking advantage of the opportunity the Munitions Acts had given them. Most workers sought solutions for their hardship, not class war, he wrote, arguing that once the industrial objects were obtained the allure of syndicalism would fade. Barnes was sympathetic to the goal of giving the workman back his voice, but through constitutional methods and within the existing structure.¹²⁸

In concert with the recent Whitley Committee proposals¹²⁹ for national joint industrial councils, Barnes proposed a Factory Workshop Committee system to restore faith in the national Executive, reporting that 'self-seeking agitators' had been replaced

¹²⁵ Ibid

¹²⁶ TNA CAB 24/17/85 (*Glasgow Herald* 31.5/6.20.17)

¹²⁷ Hidalgo-Weber, p.20; Lowe, *Adjusting*, pp.66-7 fn (TNA LAB 2/218/16 of 23 November 1917)

¹²⁸ TNA CAB 24/14/97, 'The Growth of the Shop Steward Movement'

¹²⁹ J H Whitley's Report in 'Industrial councils; the Whitley report, together with the letter of the Minister of Labour, explaining the government's view of its proposals', (London: 1917 HMSO)

with ‘responsible men’ in this way in some districts.¹³⁰ Barnes concluded that restoring trust and solidarity in the workplace was the only way to keep industrial peace. It was ‘a matter that ought not be left until the end of the war... the time is ripe for now taking it in hand.’¹³¹

Barnes’ two *Glasgow Herald* columns sought to restore national support, publicise his policies, and keep the Government from over-reacting. He drew upon sympathy for honest workers struggling under the weight of capitalistic, industrial and world conditions beyond their control. Deflecting the blame for hardship away from war policy was perhaps one of the ‘right messages’ Shackleton had recommended.¹³² Barnes envisioned a better way ahead, something of a precursor to the ‘New Jerusalem’ attitude Labour espoused during the Second World War: -

After the war, and in a world made plastic by common struggle and suffering, we are going to stamp upon it the impress of a new order, breathing into it a spirit altogether different from that which animated the old. In other words, that man is no longer going to be pitted against his fellow man, but that we are going to live in a community in which labour will be given its due place and just reward.¹³³

The first article, ‘The Future of Industry’ reiterated the merits of the Workshop Committee and included practical scenarios for restructuring industrial management. Foreshadowing innovation introduced with the ILO scheme, Barnes proposed a post-war tripartite structure of employer, worker and the State cooperating to establish greatly improved standards and conditions. To assure that dilution was just temporary, he declared that these new standards would ‘remove temptation of substitution from

¹³⁰ TNA CAB 24/14/97, ‘The Growth of the Shop Steward Movement’, p.3

¹³¹ Ibid

¹³² TNA CAB 24/14/32, ‘Report on the Labour Situation for the week ending May 23rd 1917’

¹³³ Barnes, *Glasgow Herald* ‘The Future of Industry’, 31.5.17

employers and fear of it on the part of skilled workmen.’¹³⁴ Those displaced by machines would be trained for new jobs, financed through the more efficient production methods. He concluded that after the war: -

...the nation will be impoverished, taxation will be high, and competition will be keen with countries hit less hard (than Britain)... given goodwill and co-operation, given a desire to promote an atmosphere of confidence in place of that of mistrust, then there is nothing to fear... the anarchists who have been troublesome during the war will be troublesome after it: but if we set our house in order, labour itself may be trusted to sweep them aside with the contempt they deserve.¹³⁵

There was a different tone to the second, June 20 column, printed some weeks after the Leeds Convention hailed the Russian revolution and resolved for a negotiated end to the war.^{136,137} Here Barnes even more sympathetically and philosophically depicted the need of disenfranchised labour to be closer to the centre of political and industrial life, declaring that the employer must recognise that ‘they must be given a place in the scheme of things and made to feel that they have a voice in determining the conditions under which they work.’¹³⁸ Barnes felt that radicals would be redeemed through returning ‘the human factor’ to industrial reconstruction and creating trust within the entire community of workers. ‘Democracy and efficiency must be brought into harmony instead of being in conflict’, yet he proclaimed ‘No one is to blame for this...

It is the inevitable outcome of competitive struggle in a Capitalist environment... the large-scale methods have conflicted with human rights and human emotions. They produce a smouldering discontent, liable at any time to be fanned into flame by irresponsible persons... They are the sort of things, however, that must be faced and dealt with before we can have industrial peace or political peace... We must aim at giving Home Rule to

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ ‘The Future of Industry’, *Glasgow Herald* 31.5.17

¹³⁶ 3rd June 1917; Council of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Delegates, ‘What Happened at Leeds’ (London: 1917), Jowett, Lansbury, Macdonald, Smillie and Snowden were among those elected to the Central Committee.

¹³⁷ ‘Industrial Unrest’, *Glasgow Herald* 20.6.17

¹³⁸ Ibid

industry.¹³⁹

The Industrial Unrest Commission

Barnes' involvement with the June 1917 *Commission of Enquiry into Industrial Unrest* ('Unrest Commission') particularly demonstrated his capacity to lead the British delegation of the International Labour Commission after the war. His Unrest Commission report expressed some of his own fundamental values, and considered the mutual concerns of worker, employer and State much as the 1919 Commission did on a much larger scale. Subsequently, Barnes was appointed in March 1918 to a special sub-commission of the Reconstruction Committee, tasked with making early proposals for demobilisation, housing, and reorganisation of nationalised industries in coordination with relevant departments and Ministries.¹⁴⁰ The Labour press was sceptical and unimpressed when the Commission was announced, since the Government has been so slow to deal with profiteering, and the worst of the engineering strikes ended in mid-May.^{141,142} However the Unrest Commission significantly floodlighted from official sources for the first time deeply embedded evils caused by industrialisation which transcended the hardships exacerbated by the war.

Barnes presented the combined findings of the eight commissions spanning England, Wales and Scotland on July 17, 1917. His report noted firstly a strong sense of patriotism, and that the revolutionary mindset was in the minority.¹⁴³ Anger over Governmental opaqueness and the Munitions Acts were reconfirmed, and fears that

¹³⁹ 'Industrial Unrest', *Glasgow Herald* 20.6.17

¹⁴⁰ TPA LG/F/4/22 6.3.1918

¹⁴¹ *Labour Leader* 21.6.17; Snowden quipped 'Mr. Lloyd George has sent the Commissioners on their way with a newspaper column of fatherly instructions and advice.'

¹⁴² *The Herald* 9.6.17; Lansbury mocked out-of-touch Ministers: 'there is in fact nothing to enquire about... we shall like it still less if the deadheads of the Labour movement are trotted out once again to act as the Government's adviser. We want not only fresh air but also new blood in connection with Labour matters.'

¹⁴³ TNA CAB 24/23/59, *Commission of Enquiry into Industrial Unrest. Summary*. (London: 1917 HMSO), p.5

pre-war industrial protections were forever lost were explicit.¹⁴⁴ Barnes noted the poor psychological condition of labour: feelings of inequality of sacrifice, and a sense that ‘their conditions of work and destinies are being determined by a distant authority over which they have no influence.’¹⁴⁵ It was highly recommended that the Government announce a housing policy, as ‘industrially congested’ areas were particularly lacking good housing. A ‘lack of communal sense’ was apparent in South Wales, evident in a ‘breakaway from faith in Parliamentary representation’ there. Barnes concluded again that better employer-worker relations were necessary for industrial peace, and that ‘labour should take part in the affairs of the community as partners, rather than as servants.’¹⁴⁶

Barnes reported that the poor housing situation in Barrow along with parts of Scotland and Wales, and the dire industrial and social conditions in Wales, were deeply entrenched and required longer-term attention. The report of the commission for Wales was extraordinary in its scientific and philosophical examination of psychological conditions in destitute, rural coal-mining communities.^{147,148} The political implications of unrest there were so profound that militancy was ‘almost a permanent condition... hostility to Capitalism has now become part of the political creed’ across industry. Distrust of Government was rife among employers and workers alike, and the commission for Wales placed much blame on disillusion over ‘the failure of the Labour Party to bring about a complete change in the industrial fabric.’¹⁴⁹ Barnes later urged

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, p.6

¹⁴⁵ Ibid, pp.7-8

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, pp.6-7

¹⁴⁷ TNA CAB 24/23/59/312-336

¹⁴⁸ The Welsh Commissioners expounded upon the ‘distinct cleavage’ between direct political action and industrial trade unionism, and the impact of political education on extremely poor workers in sparsely populated, isolated areas.

¹⁴⁹ TNA CAB 24/23/59/323

Lloyd George to establish a special or even a Royal Commission to help South Wales remedy its deplorable social and economic condition. He reported that the Local Government Board was unable to deal with profound housing needs and the ‘grave and revolutionary ideas’ shaping the younger generation of coal workers.¹⁵⁰

The Government did take action against profiteering before the Commission’s findings were complete, vastly expanding the remit of the Food Controller in June. Prices on bread and other goods were immediately lowered but meat prices remained extortionate while milk supplies were increased.¹⁵¹ Lord Rhondda replaced an ineffectual Lord Davenport as Food Controller, assisted by Labour’s J R Clynes,¹⁵² and a more definitive food policy was announced in August.¹⁵³ The establishment of industrial councils, as the Commissioners recommended and the Whitley Report advocated, materialised into the Joint Industrial Councils between employers and trade unions, but not until April 1919.^{154,155,156} Changes to the Munitions Acts by August 1918 included abolition of leaving certificates (which assigned skilled men to lower skilled and lower paid jobs), pension delays were addressed, and workmen’s compensation also increased. Barnes made public statements when any of the Unrest Commission recommendations were carried out.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁰ TPA DLG F/4/2/10 GNB to DLG 20.8.17; The Central College and the isolation of the valley communities reportedly exacerbated the problem.

¹⁵¹ TNA CAB 23/3/36, *Times* 27.6.17

¹⁵² John Robert Clynes (1869-1949) ILP and LRC co-founder, the first English Labour MP, for Manchester Northeast, 1906; see appendices.

¹⁵³ TNA CAB 24/23/60

¹⁵⁴ TNA LAB 2/775/1, 3

¹⁵⁵ J H Macrae-Gibson, *The Whitley system in the civil service* (London: 1922); Marius G. Levenbach, ‘Joint Industrial Councils of Great Britain’ in *Social Forces*, vol. 4, (3) March 1926, pp.613-620

¹⁵⁶ Peden assessed the short and longer-term changes to industrial and social policy the Munitions of War Acts and Unrest Commission engendered; GC Peden, *British economic and social policy: Lloyd George to Margaret Thatcher* (Britain: 1985 Phillip Allan), p.47-56

¹⁵⁷ *The Times* of 23.8, 15.10, 25.10.1917

A contemporary analyst commented that the Unrest Commission provoked unprecedented industrial and social questions that were ‘by no means limited to special war legislation.’¹⁵⁸ Although initially part of Harmsworth’s propaganda mission, the Unrest Commission prompted considerable policy change and gave Barnes the opportunity to prove his capacity for managing a comprehensive Government initiative. The all-encompassing domestic propaganda drive was taken up by the cross-party National War Aims Committee (NWAC) in August, chaired by Lloyd George, Barnes, Bonar Law and Asquith. The NWAC was highly patriotic, its core messages reflected a diffuse nationalism and values that Britain’s ‘civilised’ allies shared, guided by the principle that what came after the war would be better than what preceded it.¹⁵⁹ After the NWAC ceased its activities Barnes carried forward its ‘patriotic Labour’ ethos as a National Democratic Party (NDP) candidate during the 1918 General Election.¹⁶⁰

The Split from Labour: Country before Party

There was great controversy in August 1917 when Barnes permanently replaced Henderson, his closest colleague in the War Cabinet, as Minister without Portfolio. Barnes temporarily replaced Henderson in June 1917 when Henderson was sent by the Cabinet to Russia to convince the Provisional Government to ‘pursue the war with energy.’¹⁶¹ He quickly became convinced that the temporary government was near collapse, and sensed a tremendous threat from the Bolsheviks; the Labour Party Conference subsequently resolved in favour of an indemnity-free, negotiated settlement

¹⁵⁸ Sir William Chance, *Industrial Unrest: The Reports of the Commissioners (July 1917), Collated and Epitomised* (London: 1917 British Constitution Association); The House of Lords also debated its content and implications at length: HL Deb 07 November 1917 vol 26 cc905-52

¹⁵⁹ Monger, D, 2009. *The NWAC and British Patriotism during the First World War*. PhD. London: King's College London < <http://ethos.bl.uk/OrderDetails.do?did=2&uin=uk.bl.ethos.546716>>

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, p.34

¹⁶¹ TNA CAB 23 2 62, 23.5.17

and for the ‘unofficial’ Stockholm peace conference.¹⁶² When Henderson travelled to France with Ramsay MacDonald, representing the Union of Democratic Control (UDC)¹⁶³ to meet pacifist Socialists, Lloyd George came under increased pressure from the Allies to shun the Labour Party.¹⁶⁴ Henderson was made to wait in the hall while the Cabinet debated his fate; Barnes, who had defended Henderson and the Conference decision, was sent out to retrieve him. Henderson’s resignation came twelve days later when the Government denied passports for Labour members bound for Stockholm.¹⁶⁵

The *Labour Leader* was furious, declaring the residual Labour Cabinet could no longer speak as representatives of the Party.¹⁶⁶ Lloyd George had discarded Labour ‘as soon as a snag arose’ despite their war sacrifices.¹⁶⁷ Barnes withstood accusations of betrayal, maintaining his conviction that ‘it would be fatal to Labour to split away’, and insisting ‘we are keeping your end up in the Government.’¹⁶⁸ He had supported Labour’s Stockholm referendum vote despite his personal forebodings about letting Germany determine peace terms when it suited her most, a move which expressed his faith in democratic and constitutional procedures.¹⁶⁹ Barnes insisted that the role of the Labour Party Cabinet members was unchanged, and that the December 1916 coalition agreement held: -

As far as I was concerned, the issues of the war would from then be

¹⁶² The 1917 Labour Party Conference initially adopted the ILP resolution for negotiating peace with Germany; Henderson had convinced the NEC that Stockholm would at least ‘show the impotence of the German socialists’; Thorpe, *Labour Party*, p.39.

¹⁶³ Formed in 1914, the UDC comprised middle-class Labour and dissenting Liberals opposing Grey’s foreign policy.

¹⁶⁴ See David French, *The Strategy of the Lloyd George Coalition* (Oxford: 1995 OUP) pp.141-3 for documents regarding the British Government/Allied position.

¹⁶⁵ Henry Pelling, *A Short History of the Labour Party* (London: 1991 St. Martin’s Press) stated that Henderson ‘accordingly resigned in a state of great indignation’ immediately, p.8.

¹⁶⁶ *Labour Leader*, 23.8.17

¹⁶⁷ Leventhal, *Arthur Henderson*, p.66

¹⁶⁸ *Manchester Guardian* 22.8.17

¹⁶⁹ Barnes, *FWWC*, p.164; the miners’ voting bloc finally swung the majority against Stockholm; *Manchester Guardian* 22.8.17

regarded as too important to be again made from the sport of chance conferences, and from that time onwards I would regard my mandate as fixed, unless it were to be revoked by some clear indication, by vote or otherwise, of change of Labour opinion. There never was such indication.¹⁷⁰

Barnes has been accused of opportunism and seizing his ‘big moment’ by some commentators,¹⁷¹ but on a more measured consideration Barnes was Henderson’s most natural replacement when his position became untenable. Both downplayed the replacement, attributing it to personal decision and minor disagreement.¹⁷² Opposing statements about the ‘door mat’ incident from Beatrice Webb and Edward J. Phelan summarised the contention:¹⁷³

Amid great excitement, and under circumstances of insult and indignity which created resentment among the British working class, Mr. Henderson felt obliged to tender his resignation of his place in the War Cabinet, in which he was succeeded by Mr. Barnes, who was getting more and more out of sympathy with the majority of the Party.¹⁷⁴

...To anyone who knew Barnes the accusation that he had been guilty of dishonourable conduct was ridiculous, and in his Glasgow constituency, although the Clyde area was one of the principal centres of labour unrest, he continued to enjoy the confidence of his electors.¹⁷⁵

It was the beginning of the end for the remaining Coalition Labour members, finally disowned by the Party left in January 1918 for rejecting the Corn Production Bill. Barnes was the target of ‘vigorous attacks’ from the ILP for making Constituency speeches against wage demands while soldiers and their dependents remained

¹⁷⁰ Barnes, *FWWC*, pp.164-5; as discussed, Barnes held onto his seat until 1922.

¹⁷¹ Knox, *Leaders*, p.82

¹⁷² Barnes, *FWWC*, pp.164-5; *Manchester Guardian* 22.8.17

¹⁷³ Edward J. Phelan (1888-1967) British civil servant, intelligence department at Ministry of Labour; secretary in Paris to the British labor delegation, Assistant Secretary to the whole Labour Commission; see appendices.

¹⁷⁴ Sidney and Beatrice Webb, *The History of Trade Unionism [new impression]* (London: 1950 Longmans, Green) pp.694-5

¹⁷⁵ Phelan memoir, p.154; e.g., Smillie called Barnes ‘blackleg’ during August Labour Party conference to roars from both sides and the moniker stuck; *Manchester Guardian* 22.8.17

underpaid.¹⁷⁶ James Maxton, ‘with the satisfied tone of some evil enchanter in an Eastern tale’ proclaimed Barnes had ‘departed absolutely from the spirit of the Labour Movement’ and was ‘going under with the rest of his friends.’^{177,178} Nevertheless in March 1918, Barnes appealed to the Commercial Committee in the House of Commons not to ‘harden our hearts’ in the wake of the Russian revolution, and instead ‘look with sympathy upon all movements which are intended to extend the borders of human freedom.’¹⁷⁹

The national press regularly reported on disorderly scenes in Barnes’ constituency. By the end of August 1918, Barnes had been fully repudiated by the ILP, the Glasgow Labour Party and the Gorbals Divisional Committee. During one volatile public meeting, his declarations about post-war economics, industrial control and raised living standards were barely heard as ‘The Red Flag’ rang out, and he was beseeched to release the self-declared Bolshevik John Maclean from prison.¹⁸⁰ Barnes did free him, but Maclean ran against him as the ILP candidate for Glasgow Gorbals.¹⁸¹ Despite the furore Maclean failed to win in a contest where neither a Unionist nor Liberal candidate came forward.¹⁸²

Announcing his Coalition run as the National Labour candidate in November 1918, Barnes said: -

¹⁷⁶ *Manchester Guardian* 24.1.18; The PLP approved 30s per week, ignoring Henderson’s arguments to keep it at 25s or the Cabinet would deny it.

¹⁷⁷ James ‘Jimmy’ Maxton (1885-1946) conscientious objector and prominent ILP leader from Red Clydeside; see appendices.

¹⁷⁸ *Manchester Guardian* 24.1.18; he also named the pro-conscription Lords Milner and Curzon.

¹⁷⁹ TNA CAB 24/46/83, ‘Labour: its Aims and Objects’, delivered to The Commercial Committee, HoC, 20.3.18; he quoted Robert Burns ‘A fig for those by law protected, Liberty’s a glorious feast.’

¹⁸⁰ John Maclean (1879-1923), Scottish revolutionary socialist, see appendices.

¹⁸¹ *The Times*, 20.8.18

¹⁸² *Manchester Guardian*, 24.8.18; Barnes refused candidacy offers from the Glasgow Southern Co-operative Parliamentary Committee and the Lancaster Labour Party, preferring to fight Maclean.

My support of the war brought opposition in my constituency from that section of Labour which has now captured the Labour Party Machine. I know that this section does not represent the rank and file of Labour in the country, and for me to take my marching orders from it would be to act the part of the coward. I have no intention of doing anything of the kind. I am standing my ground. If the electorate in my constituency rejects me, well and good, that will settle it. But whether in the Government or out of it, or whether in Parliament or out of it, until peace is secure, I know no party.¹⁸³

Barnes remained MP, and Minister without Portfolio, to the war's end. He was officially appointed to the Reconstruction Committee,¹⁸⁴ promoted measures for miners' welfare, women's suffrage, and educational advance.¹⁸⁵ He urged the Prime Minister to establish a Committee of Employers and Workmen in shipbuilding because the employers were 'very upset about the governmental interference in their business.'¹⁸⁶ In his pivotal War Cabinet role, Barnes advised Lloyd George and his relatively informal Downing Street 'Garden Suburb' on numerous issues including Irish Home Rule,¹⁸⁷ relations with the ASE,¹⁸⁸ Litvinoff's impact on the British industrial situation (Barnes thought it was over-stated),¹⁸⁹ the Food Controller's office,¹⁹⁰ and Governmental appointments, offering the Prime Minister speech-writing tips inclined towards positive labour relations.^{191,192}

¹⁸³ TPA LG F/4/2/35, draft Central Hall speech excerpt, 16.11.18

¹⁸⁴ TPA LG/F/4/2/22

¹⁸⁵ Middleton, *DNB*, p.41; *The Representation of the People Act* (1918), granting the vote to many women over thirty, is not mentioned in Barnes' memoir.

¹⁸⁶ TPA LG/F/4/2/28

¹⁸⁷ TPA LG/F/4/2/29-31

¹⁸⁸ TPA LG/F/4/2/16,21

¹⁸⁹ TPA LG/F/4/2/18: Maxim Litvinov (1876 -1951) The Soviet plenipotentiary representative in Great Britain appointed John Maclean Bolshevik Consul for Scotland in Jan. 1918 and arrested later that year for addressing anti-British public gatherings opposing intervention in the Russian Civil War, et al., became USSR's American Ambassador in 1941.

¹⁹⁰ TPA LG/F/4/2/25; William Beveridge (-) was 'a failure in administration which has caused a good deal of trouble', e.g.

¹⁹¹ TPA LG/F/4/2/20,34,37

¹⁹² TPA LG/F/4/2/32

The League to Abolish War and the League of Nations

Barnes' tenacity put him in hot water with his own Government in June 1918 when they delayed committing to the idea for the League of Nations. Barnes was a founder and chair of the small but vocal Congregationalist-based Labour-supporting group, the League to Abolish War (LAW), established in 1916 with his friend, the pastor F Herbert Stead. The LAW held that international machinery for maintaining peace would 'lay down and guarantee the rights of working men, and thus offer some real opportunities for industrial reconstruction.'¹⁹³ Barnes' agitations for an official British declaration combined his extra-parliamentary activity and ministerial responsibilities, and when his public speeches were interpreted at home and abroad as Government policy the Foreign Office brought him to heel. Despite witnessing the Henderson affair first hand, Barnes apparently did not appreciate the sensitivity of his position.

As both LAW Chair and Coalition Government member, Barnes pressed for the publication of the 1917 Phillimore Commission Report advocating a post-war democratic League.¹⁹⁴ Phillimore's findings were suppressed in Britain and America for several reasons, but ultimately anything that might derail the public's full attention from a complete Allied victory was off the table.¹⁹⁵ Barnes determined during the May 1918 LAW Conference that an inter-allied commission should draft a League document, and that President Wilson should ask the Dutch to arrange meeting in the

¹⁹³ Nield, *DLB*, p.12

¹⁹⁴ TNA FO 371/3439/42-71; the commission Robert Cecil formed to investigate a League scheme in 1917; President Wilson preferred his own ideas and the British suppressed the Commission Report's release. With the aid of the American diplomat, Colonel Edward House, much of it was eventually codified in Arts.12-17 of the League Covenant.

¹⁹⁵ George Egerton, *Great Britain and the Creation of the League of Nations* [Henceforth *League*](Chapel Hill, USA: 1978 University of North Carolina Press), pp.76-7; when Wilson received an acceptable German peace note on 5 October private League discussions between Britain and America were aborted.

Hague to consider it, in part as an inducement to the Central Powers.¹⁹⁶ Stead communicated this to Balfour at the Foreign Office, suggesting that this committee should fully comprise ‘the people’s life in each nation - representatives of organised labour’, not just diplomats, lawyers and the military. What the LAW suggested, from the Government standpoint, was an ‘unofficial’ conference including political outsiders of the type the UDC, the Labour Party and international Socialist parties advocated. The proposal was made just as the German *Kaisserschlacht* pummelled Allied forces. Stead nevertheless hoped the Government could ‘speedily give effect’ to their proposals.¹⁹⁷

Barnes’ vigorous campaign for public support was immediate, attracting great press attention. He called for the Hague Conference, stressing the ‘growing feeling on the part of organised labour and democracy’ that they be involved in governmental consultations about the future peace of the world. He named the United States’ Samuel Gompers and France’s Albert Thomas as men who ‘should bring into the discussion the real, live feeling which they alone could give from direct contact with the people.’^{198,199} The *Manchester Guardian* took this as a sign that the Government was ‘anxious’ for a concrete League of Nations, and saw positive indication that the tactics of international diplomacy were changing through the inclusion of ‘a strong popular and representative element.’²⁰⁰

A sharp May 22 Foreign Office memo regarding Stead’s letter made clear that any ‘tangible scheme’ would be determined by the Allied plenipotentiaries, and it was

¹⁹⁶ TNA FO 371/3439/82, 16.5.18

¹⁹⁷ Ibid

¹⁹⁸ *The Times*, 17.5.18; Thomas (bio in appendices) was not on the commission but became the ILO’s first director in 1919.

¹⁹⁹ *New Zealand Evening Post*; *Brisbane Courier*, 18.5.18

²⁰⁰ *The Manchester Guardian*, 17.5.18, ‘Hague Conference for a League of Nations. Mr Barnes Suggestion.’ p.8

‘no use for the pacifists to delude themselves’ over a Third Hague Conference. Any scheme like theirs was beyond the boundaries of ‘practical statesmanship’, and would be ‘politely buried among the visionary schemes of the dreamers.’²⁰¹ Stead later informed Balfour that the Trades Union Congress (TUC) and PLP officially supported the LAW’s plan,²⁰² but the reply came that only the sanctioned Peace Conference would assess the feasibility of any peace-enforcing league.²⁰³

On the European continent, Barnes’ May remarks were interpreted as a volte-face on war policy, the Government seen as buckling under the weight of domestic critique. The *Berliner Tageblatt* believed that the Dutch would have no choice but to invite Germany, and Barnes’ declaration that ‘the time was ripe’ inferred that the Cabinet was nudging Wilson towards negotiated terms in ‘the strongest peace offensive to which the Lloyd George Cabinet has hitherto had to bring itself.’²⁰⁴ Even worse, Barnes had called for the Hague Conference during a commemoration of Karl Marx’s centenary. The French minority Socialist newspaper *L’Humanité* took this to heart, their correspondent perceiving an Allied call for an accord orchestrated with the Central Powers.²⁰⁵ Barnes’ remark that labour specialists be included in any peace discussion was taken as support for the Stockholm Conference ‘and similar projects.’²⁰⁶ *L’Humanité* revelled in a normally ‘jingo’ English War Cabinet member’s call for nationalisation of weapons-making and disarmament, and Barnes’ advocacy for a Germany-inclusive league was applauded. The Socialist paper concluded that a wise

²⁰¹ TNA FO 371/3439/81; seemingly drafted by Sir Cecil James Barrington Hurst (1870-1963) Foreign Office legal adviser in 1918, served on the Phillimore committee which drafted the early draft of the covenant of the League of Nations; see appendices.

²⁰² TNA FO 371/3439/91, 27.5.18, hand-written by Stead in a re-sent letter.

²⁰³ TNA FO 371/3439/83, 30.5.18

²⁰⁴ *Manchester Guardian*, ‘As the Germans see it’, 28.5.18

²⁰⁵ TNA FO 371/3439/99, Derby to Balfour 13.6.18.

²⁰⁶ French minority socialist newspaper founded in 1904, central organ of the French Communist Party 1920-1994.

Germany would immediately organise a conference of neutral and central powers with the Dutch independently.²⁰⁷

Barnes was reprimanded, as his address to a large Dartford assembly made clear. He clarified that he had been speaking without authority and stated definitively that a negotiated peace was off the table: any ‘early’ conference suggestion he made was taking account of exhausted, war-weary diplomats.²⁰⁸ Barnes declared he ‘could not talk peace when there could be no peace’, and that defeating German domination was the priority. He was definitive that Germany’s entry to the league was dependent upon a show of repentance, not as a favour but as a requirement.²⁰⁹ Once German defences faltered during the summer of 1918, however, Barnes returned to publicly agitating for the League, taking on the officials during his August Cambridge University address -

The man in the street is thinking far ahead of Foreign Office and Governments on these matters, and will at once assert himself if the question begins really to be discussed through the public Press and platform in the form of concrete, practical proposals. The peoples are not going to be content with mere rinsings of historical dustbins, but will insist on a scheme based on present needs... I want the League of Nations idea to be brought down from the Olympian heights of eloquent rhetoric to the plane of matter-of-fact, practical proposition.²¹⁰

It has been observed that this ‘surely must have violated all the tenets of collective Cabinet responsibility.’²¹¹ Barnes spoke of collective security and diminished necessity for sovereignty after the war, and that ‘regulation and restriction must take the place of

²⁰⁷ TNA FO 371/3439/99

²⁰⁸ *The Times*, 17.6.18, ‘League of Nations. Mr Barnes’s Scheme.’

²⁰⁹ Ibid

²¹⁰ TNA CAB/24/60/64, ‘League of Nations Lecture, University Extension Summer Meeting, Cambridge’ 5.8.18, pp.7-8

²¹¹ Egerton, *League*, p.77

competition.²¹² ‘The new order’ after the war, Barnes declared, required labour’s full participation: -

Labour is not going back to the old position of dependence and subordination. It will take its rightful place in the world of industry as a partner and sharer in the responsibilities of management in all that relates to its citizen rights and in the maintenance of decent standards of life... All classes will have to help in the creation of a new world by way of peaceful and orderly evolution.²¹³

Labour and the New World Order

By September 1918, Barnes had safely retained his War Cabinet seat, confident about his position as the interconnected reconstruction ministries considered labour’s place in the post-war settlement. Barnes made public declarations about the Government’s plans for the Paris peace discussions. ‘We have had international industrial congresses and commissions in the past, but beyond passing resolutions they have done little or nothing. What we need is some kind of international machinery that will set up and enforce a decent standard of life.’²¹⁴ A special commission would consider how to secure that goal, and report its findings to the League of Nations to be put into operation ‘as part of its duties.’ Barnes said his first task was ensuring the British delegation had a detailed proposal for ‘some definite plan of organisation’ by December, minimising the odds that the Peace Conference would pass without yielding a ‘practical result.’²¹⁵

Woodrow Wilson declared on September 27 that the League of Nations Covenant would be incorporated into the Peace Treaty, and the Germans agreed to a

²¹² TNA CAB/24/60/64, pp.5-6

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ *Clerkenwell Daily Chronicle* c. Sept. 1917 cited in Barnes, *FWWC* p.244

²¹⁵ Barnes, *FWWC* pp.224-5

peace based upon his fourteen points on October 6. Barnes presided over a prestigious meeting at Westminster's Central Hall where Lord Grey announced Wilson's policy to massive cross-party support.²¹⁶ Barnes was again coy, joking that his position 'of some responsibility in the affairs of State' was 'temporary, accidental, and ...sometimes embarrassing.'²¹⁷ Lord Grey praised Barnes, noting the respect he had commanded from the entire House of Commons as a member of the Labour Party (some weeks ahead of his Party resignation, discussed below). Grey's speech signified that labour's progress had entered a new phase: -

I think Labour is undoubtedly going to take a larger and more prominent share in Governments than it has before. It may be that here, as elsewhere, we shall have Labour Governments... Is it not possible that as Labour takes a larger and more prominent share in government, it may find a League of Nations useful as a means of giving a more official character to these international consultations in the interest of Labour which independent Labour has already encouraged and taken so much part in?²¹⁸

The 1918 General Election

After the November 1918 armistice, the December General Election that followed returned a tremendous victory for the Lloyd George Coalition. The implications of the end of the electoral truce, for the nation and for the Labour Party, have been widely discussed.²¹⁹ Less than two weeks after the Coalition's victory, Barnes was chosen to go to Paris by Lloyd George, as British Labour's representative at the Peace Conference. J S Middleton succinctly stated that he remained in the

²¹⁶ Edward Grey, Viscount Grey of Fallodon (1862–1933) foreign secretary, 1906-16; see appendices.

²¹⁷ *The Times*, 11.10.18

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ For concise depictions of how the 1918 GE affected both Labour and the Liberals, see Thorpe, pp.50-2; Morgan *The Age of Lloyd George* 74-6; and Pearce & Stewart, *British Political History*, pp.218-9; the satirically-named 'coupon' election prompted the significant revision of the Labour Party manifesto and signalled the transcendence of Labour over a deeply-divided Liberal Party.

Coalition ‘with the avowed object of influencing the peace terms.’²²⁰ Barnes quipped cheekily after the Liberal Prime Minister and Conservative Chancellor of the Exchequer, Austen Chamberlain,²²¹ made their maiden campaign speeches that they had virtually adopted the same socialistic language he had long employed: ‘May I say they have been converted to our point of view? Or is it that we have been so much misunderstood? I might almost sit down now after saying “ditto” to all they have said.’ Barnes’ departure from the Party he had helped create was official, and this heartfelt, significant declaration warrants reproduction: -

My appearance today on this platform marks for me a definite break – temporarily, at all events – from my political past... I owe all I am and all I have to Labour. I want nothing better than to serve Labour, and I feel perfectly convinced that I shall serve them best by staying in the present Government until the country gets through to a period of peace and security.²²²

Despite reported cries of ‘stick it’ from the crowd, he carried on: -

...When I say peace, I include industrial and social peace, because to my mind, it would be a tragic thing if this war abroad were followed by industrial convulsions at home. But there is no change to my attitude... I think that coming out of the Government now would be a bad thing for Labour, because it would deprive Labour of a voice in the conditions in the period of transition from war to peace.²²³

...The Peace Conference is going to give us a new world, in which each nation will be free to paddle its own canoe and live its own life under its own form of government... we shall be able for the first time, I hope, to apply our minds to lifting life and labour from the lower animal struggle for the bread that perisheth...²²⁴

²²⁰ Middleton, *DLB*, p.42

²²¹ (Joseph) Austen Chamberlain (1863-1937), Secretary of State for India under Asquith but lingered, 1915-7, Minister without Portfolio, 1918; see appendices.

²²² *The Times*, 16.11.18, ‘Mr Barnes on Industry after the War. A Call to Labour’

²²³ TPA LG F/4/2/35, the original draft read ‘transition of *industrial conditions* from war to peace’ and showed that any remarks indicating bitterness against the Party were struck out.

²²⁴ *The Times*, 16.11.18

He announced that when peace was secure, and reconstruction safely underway, he would probably retire.

Barnes was not sorry that such turbulence left him free to follow his own course.²²⁵ Looking back in 1923, he accepted the criticism that Coalition Labour received. 'We had to help carry out laws and regulations contrary to Labour's cherished ideals', an 'inevitable condition of coalition government intent on the full prosecution of war.'²²⁶ Barnes was adamant he would fulfil his mandate and secure for labour that which had been promised: -

That particular part of the garden of peace allotted to me was that of Labour... what I feared was that the Peace Conference would be confronted only with time-worn rhetorical phrases which would lead to no practical result. My job was to contribute to the carrying out of some definite plan of organisation.²²⁷

Chapters two through five that follow discuss chronologically the role Barnes played in preparing for the Peace Conference while in Britain until January 1919, and while in Paris in late March 1919 when the Labour Commission officially ended its work there. Chapter Six then examines Barnes' life and work after the 1919 Peace Conference, comprising a review of additional sources discovered and research needed to create a full biography of George N. Barnes that covers in depth his latter years as an international diplomat, and as a spokesperson, educator and representative for world labour.

²²⁵ Barnes, *FWWC* p.199

²²⁶ Barnes discussed at length the Labour Party decision to run independently. *FWWC* pp 195-201.

²²⁷ *Ibid*, pp.224-5

Conclusions

Barnes' social awareness, political career and policy choices were shaped in the nineteenth century, as a labourer before trade unions had amassed great power, and before industrial protections and provisions were part of working class existence. A communitarian, ethical 'practicality' underpinned his entire perspective, before and following the Labour Party's creation, for his class comprised most of society yet was deprived of life's most basic provisions. As his activism advanced, the desire to do the most good for the most in the community was reinforced when he saw 'revolutionary' types pitting man against man in (what he assessed as) a cerebral and selfish class-war exercise. A practical understanding of Parliament reinforced his belief that for Labour to succeed with progressive reform, it had to be 'a broad church', a class-free coalition appealing to those sympathetic with the working-class and not exclusive to it. A turbulent turn on the ASE Executive reinforced his preference for and faith in constitutional practices and structures when he saw a handful of men once again put their interests, whether on the Executive or the shop floor, before those of the community-at-large.

As a Parliamentarian, Barnes supported 'new' Liberal policies to advance Labour's agenda. As the rift with the Clyde mounted he persevered, almost relishing the challenge, believing that militancy must remain in the minority lest it confound the course of the Party. As the Labour Party struggled to find its feet he too struggled to lead it, as nineteenth century ideas tried to adjust to twentieth century priorities. Political Labour came about during rapid industrial, social and technological change, and the implications of such rapid change (Barnes pre-dated electricity!) were most challenging. Similarly, the war exceeded even the wildest imaginations in scale and

ferocity, and Barnes again struggled to balance human mortality with Cabinet responsibility. Such was the horror of the thought of another such conflagration that Barnes fought for a democratic league of nations even after incurring the wrath of his own Cabinet. Had the November armistice not arrived when it did, his path may indeed have taken a different course: given his obstinacy he could have wound up outside Government and Party.

While Henderson's attempt to 'serve two masters' ultimately led to the reorganisation of the Labour Party machine, Barnes' attempt took him toward the institutionalised reorganisation of international labour. His small ideas about national Workshop Committees and their constitutional structures, underpinned by his ideological beliefs about ethical morality and edification, translated into large visions mirrored in the International Labour Conference's composition of socialists, academics, government members and trade unionists. Barnes' abilities and ideological beliefs were constantly tested in the Lloyd George administration, and his complex War Cabinet role consolidated his work as propagandist, labour conciliator and policy coordinator, ultimately preparing him for the work in Paris. He was admittedly opportunistic, recognising the potential to broadcast his personal propaganda about the redirection of industry, and adamant that the State had acknowledged labour's right of inclusion in the decision-making process.

Barnes' high visibility during the war's final phases, and consistent use of anti-Bolshevist messaging, helped secure moderate, majority support for the idea that British labour could sit comfortably within the centres of power. Barnes elevated British Labour's profile on the international stage as the war ended, an 'acceptable' face of socialism standing alongside David Lloyd George and President Woodrow

Wilson, elevating the Party's appearance of responsibility. He also knew that Labour could not remain outside the Peace Conference as a mere pressure group or as the Royal Opposition. The competing tensions between socialism, trade unionism and parliamentary democracy that characterised Barnes' domestic public life ultimately propelled him toward the international sphere. While channelling many international ideas during his time serving the Labour Commission in Paris, however, Barnes' relatively restrained 'internationalism' at that stage always maintained British, 'national' overtones, very much attuned to the general setting of the Allied Peace Conference. The following sections discuss how his experiences there may have shaped his outlook and direction.

2 Preparations ahead of the Peace Conference

No single item provoked the War Cabinet to declare an official policy on the reorganisation of labour and its place at the Peace Conference, but as the Labour Party and the Second International pressed for an independent, concurrently running labour congress, Barnes worked from within to influence and expedite the Government's proactive stance. Barnes had been broadcasting that his Government would devise a plan for restructuring labour since 1917, as discussed above. From November 1918 Barnes communicated confidentially with Henderson (Chairman of the Labour Party he had just left), about such plans, before Balfour made Henderson an official adviser to the Labour Commission in late January 1919. Henderson had become a well-established figure within the Second International and his correspondence with Barnes indicated that a joint effort to influence the Government position was afoot.

The inception of the Labour Commission

Further documentation showed that as early as February 1918 Barnes had argued during War Cabinet meetings in support of a world labour conference including Allies and former enemies. He cited the need to respond to shifting international opinion, pointing out the diplomatic value in guiding former hostiles towards 'responsible peace terms,'¹ and that denying such a conference would only 'create friction and strengthen the disaffected element in the community.' Furthermore, a Bolshevik-led conference would probably exclude people like Henderson and Hjalmar Branting, leader of Switzerland's Social Democratic Party, Barnes explained.^{2,3} Barnes fully supported the

¹ TNA CAB 24/41/56, 7.2.18

² Hjalmar Branting (1860-1925), Swedish reformist socialist politician, believed that universal suffrage would lead to a peaceful transition from capitalism; was PM three times from 1920, brought Switzerland into the League, won the Nobel Prize in 1921.

³ TNA CAB 24/41/56, 7.2.18

September 1918 International Socialist and Labour Conference (ISLC) decision for a Paris labour congress to run concurrently with the pending Allied peace talks. He personally directed the Foreign Office to ensure passports for Henderson and William Gillies when the time came, suggesting that Camille Huysmans⁴ use Barnes' handwritten letter if the Belgian authorities gave him any trouble.^{5,6}

Germany had also announced they would take a stand concerning the future direction of labour in Paris, a point wielded by the TUC which prompted further Governmental introspection. On November 1st a TUC and Labour Party delegation had intimated to the War Cabinet that Germany might take credit for the formal labour declaration in the Treaty if Britain hesitated. Their declaration inferred their expectation of directly influencing the British Commission responsible for the Treaty's labour section, also asking the Prime Minister officially to sanction the conference they and other 'responsible' labour organisations were promoting.⁷ The TUC statement highlighted Chancellor Prince Maximilian Wilhelm of Baden's proclamation that German plenipotentiaries would raise the question of minimum standards for world labour during the Peace Conference.^{8,9}

Barnes informed Henderson that the Imperial War Cabinet discussed the TUC's declaration 'at length' in early December.¹⁰ During the meeting, Barnes pressed for

⁴ Camille Huysmans (1871-1968) Belgian politician, educator, pacifist, labour union activist and secretary of the Second International (1905-1922), was working out of Labour's London office at the time.

⁵ The conference eventually took place in Berne, Feb. 1919; Barnes also claimed intervening on behalf of the British Socialist Party's E.C. Fairchild and Frank Shaw, but they were denied visas by the French consulate. *The Times*, 8.10.18.

⁶ PHM LSI 3/59, GNB to AH 23.10.18; 3/60 Hodgson to Gillies, 24.10.18 (the latter contained a note from Barnes to Gompers who it was assumed would be in Paris; its contents are unknown).

⁷ PHM LSI 3/94, 1.1.18

⁸ Prince Maximilian Alexander Friedrich Wilhelm Margrave of Baden (aka Max von Baden, 1867-1929) Max of Baden here; German prince, politician; heir to the Grand Duchy of Baden; briefly served as Chancellor of the German Empire, Oct-Nov 1918.

⁹ PHM LSI 3/95/1/1.i and TNA CAB 24/70/87 11.11.18; the written Declaration came eleven days later

¹⁰ This is GNB's account to AH [PHM LSI 5/1/9, 4.12.18] the Cabinet minute is exceedingly spare.

religious, labour and other conferences to be allowed to convene freely and make presentations to the Peace Conference, seeking an official statement that the Treaty talks would thereby ‘harmonise’ in principle with mass workers’ opinion.¹¹ He was steadfast when met with resistance, explaining (in Clemenceau’s presence) that he only wanted the British Government to do what France’s Prime Minister had done, alluding to Leon Jouhaux of the *Confédération générale du travail* (General Confederation of Labour / CGT)’s unofficial counsel.¹² Barnes’ boldness paid off, and the British, Italian and French Governments all assented. Lloyd George remarked that he held no overt objection to Barnes’ suggestion, but warned that it was ‘very dangerous to have too much to do with these “Soviets.”’^{13,14}

Barnes informed Henderson immediately, even drafting a letter for Lloyd George’s signature to make it official. The letter was withheld on account of the Allies’ refusal to take any decisions until American opinion was clear; nevertheless, the Prime Minister consented to Barnes’ and Henderson’s unofficial liaison. He let Barnes warn Henderson early on that the Allies would insist that the labour conference be held in a neutral country. Barnes wrote that the Prime Minister ‘...agreed that I might let you know on the quiet, so that as much time as possible might be given to you to make the necessary arrangements, as I put it to him that would be only fair and was in fact necessary.’¹⁵ Barnes suggested that holding it on neutral territory might help ‘ensure that the terms of the Peace Treaty harmonised with the wishes of the mass of the

¹¹ TNA CAB 23/42/13, 3.12.18

¹² Leon Jouhaux (1879-1954) Trade union leader, formed the CGT in 1906 ; Clemenceau reportedly listened to Jouhaux more than members of the French Labour Ministry. Source: Arthur Fontaine, in Shotwell’s interviews for *Origins*: Jouhaux ‘pushed’ Clemenceau toward the idea of social legislation, since Clemenceau ‘did not understand or care’ much about it; ILO 10.5.30

¹³ TNA CAB 23/42/13, 3.12.18; Soviets meaning unofficial civic groups.

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ PHM LS 5/1/9, GNB to AH 4.12.18

workpeople in Europe’, and he assured Henderson that the Allies would thereby present ‘no obstacle’ against its proceeding before the Treaty was signed.¹⁶

The Home Office and MoL joint memorandum of December 9, *Labour Matters and the Peace Conference* (‘joint memo’), opened by reiterating the German statement, making clear that the Government had taken the TUC’s warning seriously. It determined that a British-led labour commission would announce its aims early in the Peace Conference, proposing specific labour provisions for the Treaty, before the League’s membership was fully determined. It made the political, economic and diplomatic cases for Britain to take the lead ‘in advocating international regulation on labour matters’ by setting up the commission to establish a permanent body under the League of Nations. The joint memo supposed that including labour representatives on the proposed body would quiet some of the rabble by educating them about the ‘difficulties’ proposed by their demands, as well as guaranteeing that their interests were fully accounted for.¹⁷ The commission’s announcement also fulfilled a propaganda aim by lessening impressions that ‘the economic terms of peace will be framed solely in “capitalist” and commercial interests.’¹⁸ The joint memo represented a Governmental attempt to acknowledge, and at the same time restrain, labour’s power. The War Cabinet agreed to its recommendations, and officially decreed on December 14 that a British labour section in Paris would ‘consider and frame the proposals for a permanent international organisation for the consideration of labour questions.’¹⁹

Barnes once again wasted no time in comparing notes with Henderson.

Alluding to an earlier conversation, he wrote: -

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ TNA LAB 2/774/1 9.12.18

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ ILO 1.04.D05, 14.12.18

I forgot to mention the other day that there should be employers represented as well as employees in the drawing up of labour conditions. They will be concerned equally with labour – especially in the subsequent carrying out of conditions laid down because they will be interested in preventing unfair competition. Of course nothing is settled but I thought it worthwhile to put this to you as something in my mind and which I did not mention this morning.²⁰

Gillies replied to Barnes that Henderson ‘appreciates the point that on any official Commission for the preparation of the labour clauses of the Peace Treaty employers as well as employees must be represented. He thanks you very much for drawing attention to this fact.’²¹ Henderson reciprocated in the information exchange by giving Barnes the names of the Labour delegates and secretariat for the independent labour and socialist conference (ILSC) being planned for Switzerland.

This evidence demonstrates how Barnes was an integral link between the TUC and Labour Party, the majority socialist movement, the British Government and the European Allies during pre-Peace Conference preparations. The 1918 Barnes-Henderson correspondence revealed little if any animosity, contrary to the acrimony sometimes portrayed, indicating that some of the older historiographies were based on sensational newspaper accounts of a rift. Very little of this original correspondence survives in the Henderson papers at the PHM, Manchester, and the copies preserved in Shotwell’s *ILO Origins* files offer insight into the potentially valuable records lost with Barnes’ personal archive.

The ‘great working-class world charter’

The germ of the plan which became the International Labour Organisation, and was inscribed as Chapter 13 of the Peace Treaty, had first begun to take shape and form on a couple of sheets of typescript in No. 2 Whitehall

²⁰ PHM LSI 3/63, 31.12.18

²¹ PHM LSI 3/65, 7.1.19

Gardens, in the last days of 1918, as a result of conversations between myself and Messrs. Butler and Phelan, and Sir David Shackleton, of the Ministry of Labour... My faithful secretary, Mr G. M. Hodgson, assisted in its production.

George N. Barnes, *From Workshop to War Cabinet*, 1923²²

Joint agreement between the Foreign Office, Home Office and MoL determined Barnes' dual role as British Empire Delegation plenipotentiary and leader of the quasi-independent British labour section. He was chosen third, after Shackleton's London responsibilities appeared too demanding, as did (Lord) Robert Cecil's activity with the League of Nations Council.²³ Robert Cecil and Barnes had long promoted the League of Nations concept, and they regularly consulted on questions regarding the ILO and League relationship. Trade unionists and 'men of wide views' were also considered for the Labour Commission, but neither British organised labour nor employers' groups, nor the Dominions, were directly represented on it.²⁴

As the New Year broke, Barnes made public proclamations about 'the great working-class world charter' the British would bring to the Peace Conference, even though its start date was still unknown.²⁵ He neatly summarised the combined Foreign Office, League of Nations Council, Ministry of Labour and Home Office plan: -

The Peace Congress will be first invited to agree to the principle of an international standard for labour, and then it is proposed to refer the matter to an Industrial Commission to consider and report on the measures to be taken to secure this end... This Commission would sit at the same time as the Peace Congress, and report to it. Then it will be the duty of the Congress to adopt these recommendations – and possibly hand them over to the League of Nations to put them into operation as part of its duties.

Permanent international machinery established by the Peace Treaty's signatories could

²² Barnes, *FWWC* pp.247-8

²³ ILO 1.04.B05, 14.12.18

²⁴ Ibid

²⁵ *The Daily Chronicle* (Glasgow), 1.1.19

‘enforce a decent standard of life’ through compulsory measures, underpinned by freedom of combination, making up for the ‘pious resolutions’ of the past. Recalling being bundled out of sight as a boy when a rare factory inspection occurred, he declared ‘You may pass any amount of industrial legislation, but if there is no organisation capable of seeing that it is put into operation, it will be useless.’ Past Berne Conference resolutions on children’s and women’s labour would become binding, and Barnes depicted progressive, practical measures including insurance to pay for industrial workers’ holidays, bringing them ‘to the level of the clerk and the civil servant.’ Themes of international unity were evoked as Barnes stressed his wish to adopt ‘the principle laid down by Mr. Gompers that labour shall no longer be treated as a commodity.’ ‘I have every hope,’ he concluded, ‘that we shall be able to put the thing through. If we can, it will prove a long step in the direction of permanent international peace.’²⁶

The MoL’s Edward Phelan was in Paris from January 2nd preparing residence and offices for the British labour section, distilling numerous memoranda into a single lengthy document.^{27,28} Barnes was summoned from London by Lloyd George on January 15 to lead the Commission as Minister without Portfolio. The TUC PLP was still demanding independent Peace Conference representation, and Barnes’ appointment caused considerable upset; it was reported that ‘a protest would have been probable’ had he been named the official British Labour delegate for Paris.²⁹ Barnes defended his electoral mandate to represent organised labour, asserting that the Labour Party’s decision to ‘sever its connexion’ with the Government undermined their complaint: -

²⁶ *The Daily Chronicle* (Glasgow), 1.1.19.

²⁷ ILO 0.00.03 (Shotwell interview notes)

²⁸ ILO 1.05.P01, *Memoranda on the Machinery and Procedure Required for the International Regulation of Industrial Conditions*. c. 1.19

²⁹ *The Times*, 16.1.19 ‘Mr Barnes for Paris’

It is ridiculous for an outside body, as the Labour Party is, to suggest that it should be specially represented on a Government delegation... (if they were admitted) other organisations, such as the Liberal Party and the Churches, would have an equal right to be represented. The Government could not allow one section of the community to attend the Peace Conference without extending a similar privilege to all other sections...

...It can not be too strongly emphasised that the promise to the Labour Party of a Labour representative at the Peace Conference was made conditional upon the Labour Party's remaining in the Coalition Government.³⁰

Barnes spoke in the heat of the moment, but his conundrum was apparent. Reconciling the gap between direct and indirect representation of a plethora of labour groups and interests, while satisfying various national governments in an international conference setting was a formidable as well as unprecedented task. His recent divorce from the Labour Party considerably complicated things.

A flurry of preparatory meetings took place in January before the formation of the Labour Commission ('Commission' from here) in February. Ahead of Barnes' arrival, informal but important meetings between Phelan, Harold Butler of the MoL, and American delegation members including Professor Shotwell took place. Few official records of these sessions exist, so the personal testimonies and notes of Barnes, Phelan, Shotwell and Butler are relied upon. Shotwell's behind-the-scenes mediation immediately proved invaluable and he remained intimately involved with the British ILO scheme despite his numerous Peace Conference obligations on behalf of the American delegation. Shotwell recalled 'From the very first the British were ready to lay all their cards on the table... With the customary efficiency of the British Civil

³⁰ Ibid

Service they had gone much farther than merely to outline a program of labor clauses for the Peace Treaty.’³¹

British delegation members Phelan, Butler and Philip Noel-Baker,³² dined with Shotwell and his colleagues Dr Sidney Mezes,³³ and Dr Isaiah Bowman,³⁴ discussing the scheme late into the night before Barnes landed.³⁵ Butler recalled that Shotwell ‘quickly saw (the draft’s) importance and began to stir the notice of the American delegation.’³⁶ His belief in the scheme was instrumental towards raising the Commission’s profile at the Peace Conference: he, like Barnes, knew that the British scheme required a ‘strong and effective body of international public opinion’ behind it.³⁷ Shotwell wisely insisted that conservative elements worldwide would only support a plan building on proven precedents and existing international labour agreements, not a ‘new and utopian scheme’, or anything ‘revolutionary.’³⁸ Notably, Shotwell was the first to acknowledge that federated states might argue against international legislation agreed by treaty, but at the same time did not feel the envisioned Labour Conference’s recommendations would be so controversial as to ‘prove insuperable.’³⁹

³¹ James T. Shotwell, *At the Paris Peace Conference* (Henceforth ‘Shotwell diary’)(New York, USA: 1937 Macmillan), p.108

³² (Baron) Philip John Noel-Baker (1889–1982), Robert Cecil’s secretary, served the LON secretariat through 1922, see appendices.

³³ Sidney Edward Mezes (1863-1931) American delegation to the PC, director of ‘The Inquiry’; Pres. of the College of the City of New York c. 1917 (also Colonel Edward House’s brother-in-law).

³⁴ Isaiah Bowman, AB, Ph. D. (1878-1950) American geographer, educator and publisher, advised Wilson on territorial matters; played a major role in determining the Balkans settlement.

³⁵ Shotwell diary, p.121

³⁶ (Sir) Harold Butler, *Confident Morning* (London: 1950 Faber & Faber), p.166

³⁷ Shotwell diary, p.124; 19 ILO 1.06.D03.1, *Note of informal discussion bet. Members of American Commission and Labour sect. of British Delegation*, 15.1. 19 (Phelan minute)

³⁸ ILO 1.06.D03.1, *ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*

Barnes in Paris and the progression of the British draft

This study examines only briefly the technical aspects of the draft's progression, focussing instead on the challenges Barnes and the British labour delegation faced.⁴⁰ Barnes, Phelan and Butler further considered their Commission's remit, and Butler's January 17 memo weighed up the scheme's philosophical principles and diplomatic aims in depth over twelve pages.⁴¹ The numerous scribbles and margin comments on Butler's draft make the scale and scope of these talks evident; the addition of non-governmental representatives to the Labour Conference is a stand-out feature. An outstanding final page entry also read: 'Barnes – freedom of association to be a principle.'⁴² This key ideal of international trade unionism was added to the preamble of the scheme and remained a core tenet despite many reconfigurations, becoming the second point 'of special and urgent importance' when the Peace Conference gave final approval to the Labour Charter's nine points, which are discussed in a later chapter.⁴³

When Sir Malcolm arrived from London he was reportedly 'shocked' to find the scheme gave the conference vote to non-governmental delegates, believing that labour and capital's representatives should be advisers only lest they diminish the decision-making ability of States.⁴⁴ Phelan's recollections stated that Barnes argued that the scheme would fail in that way, while Sir Malcolm assumed that governments would not honour their minority conference position. Barnes 'pondered gloomily' as the scheme's core innovation was challenged, reportedly suggesting two votes for each governmental delegate to prevent a standoff. Sir Malcolm called Barnes' suggestion 'ingenious' for it

⁴⁰ See appendices for comparison of the draft Convention of 21 January to its final state as Chapter XIII of the Treaty

⁴¹ ILO 1.08.D01.2, Butler notes, 16-17.1.19

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ *Draft Articles for Insertion in the Treaty of Peace* 28.4.19; reproduced in *Origins*, vol. II, doc. 52: 'The right of association for all lawful purposes by the employed as well as by the employers.'

⁴⁴ Phelan memoir, p.149

balanced employer and employed while leaving the States with enough investment to respect Conference decisions.⁴⁵ When the British draft was first presented to the Commission, this 'plural vote' became problematic very quickly.

The British draft scheme 'marked a break with all previous diplomatic tradition and practice' as it came to involve the participation of the State, employers and workpeople, holding an annual Conference where international Conventions, adopted by a two-thirds' majority, would subsequently be considered for ratification by national parliaments.⁴⁶ Workers' representation at the Conference was central to the ILO Convention and arguably the most important, democratic aspect of the scheme; therefore the number of labour versus State delegates was fiercely debated once the scheme faced its first reading by the Commission. Equally important, the draft attempted to discern that 'a scheme on these lines does not infringe the real sovereignty of any country. It provides for the freest possible expression of opinion by all the parties concerned, and would make it possible to develop a really international public opinion on industrial questions, without which no attempt at industrial labour regulation could ever become effective...'.⁴⁷ Initially loose verbiage led to a three-way clash involving democracy, sovereignty and constitutionality which weighed heavily upon all of the Commission discussions which Barnes continually struggled to negotiate.

Prolonged pressure for a sign of Peace Conference action was in large part delayed by the first British General Election since 1910. The initial, preliminary plenary session of January 18 had a 'fragmentary and hastily improvised' programme giving the appearance that things were going badly behind the scenes, prompting suggestions of a

⁴⁵ Ibid, pp.150-1; Phelan felt Sir Malcolm did not realise how much the world had changed since the war.

⁴⁶ ILO 1.08.D01.3, *Memorandum on the machinery and procedure required for the international regulation of industrial conditions, prepared in the British Delegation*, 15-20.1.19

⁴⁷ Ibid

sham staged to distract from ‘the real progress of negotiations rather than to furnish a proper clue as to what was actually taking place.’⁴⁸ The summoning of the plenary was surprising, as was Clemenceau’s announcement that the third Order of the Day was international labour legislation, after responsibility for war and penalties for war crimes: ‘The third question... can even be treated from the point of view of the organisation of labour; it therefore covers a wide field.’⁴⁹ Such vagueness created ‘great panic in the newspaper world, as no one knew what was meant’, Shotwell recalled.⁵⁰ The British submitted their concise ‘Treaty’ version of their scheme to the Conference Secretariat in only three days.⁵¹ Shotwell’s American press statement framed international labour legislation as a continuation of existing proposals, providing a historical summary that emphasised the positive outcomes of past Berne and Leeds negotiations.⁵² He depicted the British proposal as the antithesis of Bolshevist-style plans aimed at changing the political order: the associated ‘Shotwell Recommendations’ he penned were mild enough to be incorporated into the ‘Black Book’ of technical documents that the American Plenipotentiaries regularly referred to.⁵³

Barnes issued a compelling memo to the full British Empire Delegation (‘BED’) as the Conference received the draft, urging the Prime Minister’s assistance in attaining further input from British employers and labour representatives as soon as possible: -

...This is in accordance with declarations and promises made. It has been matter of common agreement that the respective Governments should accept

⁴⁸ Shotwell diary, pp.127-8

⁴⁹ Excerpt from ‘Preliminary Peace Conference, Protocol Number I, Session of January 18, 1919’ in *Origins* vol. II, doc 26; also at Univ. of Wisconsin (USA) Library [online]; full minutes of *The Preliminary Peace Conference: Minutes of the Plenary Sessions* @ < <http://images.library.wisc.edu/FRUS/EFacs/1919Parisv03/reference/frus.frus1919parisv03.i0005.pdf> > p. 169; accessed 4.1.16

⁵⁰ Shotwell diary, p.128

⁵¹ 1.08.D01, *Draft Scheme for International Labour Regulation*, 21.1.19

⁵² 1906 and 1917 respectively

⁵³ *Origins*, vol. II, doc. 29

suggestions and representation made by the voluntary organisations of their respective countries.... I suggest that we should invite representatives from Great Britain to consult with us on its terms...⁵⁴

Barnes' memo emphasised industrial militancy for the sake of his audience and his end goal. Employers, he wrote, were 'much more willing than they have ever been before to co-operate in the higher standards of life', but labour's support was especially vital as they had separated from the government politically, were 'restive' and 'indeed somewhat aggressive': -

...an opportunity now offers of getting the Trade Union elements to co-operate in practical measures of amelioration and improvement... (We should consult) Labour representatives now before committing ourselves to plans which require their co-operation to make them successful... or otherwise they might come in grudgingly, or might not even come in at all...⁵⁵

Phelan recalled that the employers could not arrange a Paris delegation quickly enough but sent in suggestions, the most interesting being that 'the organization would be of little use unless it was given mandatory powers,'⁵⁶ implying little trust in government and/or frustration with existing arbitration procedures. When the Peace Conference finally opened on January 25, it declared that the League of Nations would be an integral part of the Treaty and the International Labour Commission was officially formed.⁵⁷

The joint TUC – BED sessions

Barnes' natural pragmatism and leadership ability came to the fore during a

⁵⁴ ILO 1.08.D04, 21.1.19

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Phelan memoir, p.152; there are a number of employers' letters in TNA LAB 2 series including those to the WC Organising Committee with questions they wanted the 1919 Conference to address.

⁵⁷ Paris Peace Conf. 180.0201/2, Annex 4, *Draft Resolution on International Legislation on Labor*, pp.202-3 (The Paris Peace Conf., 1919, vol III) source: University of Wisconsin-Madison Libraries digital collections <<http://digioll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/FRUS/FRUS-idx?id=FRUS.FRUS1919Parisv03>> accessed 2.1.17

series of joint meetings of leaders of the British TUC and of the Dominion governments which he chaired from 27th to 29th January. Phelan minuted these and believed that Barnes' decision to join the two groups for expediency's sake was both 'ingenious and politically highly astute.'⁵⁸ Barnes complained in his memoir that it was virtually impossible to get the fragmented BED to meet, and they 'ceased in a practical sense to be a separate entity' unless the Prime Minister rounded them up.⁵⁹

Before the Commission was officially announced, Barnes had issued invitations to each of the Dominion Prime Ministers to meet with a small TUC delegation to discuss the scheme, feeling they should be quite familiar with the draft he had been circulating.⁶⁰ The three-way 'clash' referenced earlier came into play during these pre-Commission joint sessions: the constitutional challenge for federated states, differing views as to the balance of powers between the state and the producers of capital, and the perceived threat to national sovereignty – something the Dominion leaders in particular resisted. 'Disagreement on many issues' was recorded emanating from the Dominion delegates regarding their status within the scheme and within the League of Nations while both were still in development. Phelan recalled that it seemed from the outset that the Dominions would give a plan for international labour legislation short shrift. He also questioned what impression Barnes 'with his quiet gentle manner' could make on comparatively 'strong personalities' like Sir Robert Borden, Prime Minister of Canada, and William "Billy" Hughes, Prime Minister of Australia.^{61 62}

⁵⁸ Phelan memoir, p.152

⁵⁹ Barnes went to all of the Paris BED sessions, excusing himself from the Labour Commission only very rarely, leaving Sir Malcolm as his alternate.

⁶⁰ ILO 1.08.D06 (copy telegram to Hughes of Australia, 24.1.19); the others were Borden and Draper (CA), Ward (NZ), Lloyd (Newfoundland), and Kershaw (India). Not all attended all meetings.

⁶¹ Phelan memoir, p.152

⁶² William 'Billy' Morris Hughes, CH, PC, KC (1862-1952) Labour/National Labour/Nationalist Prime Minister of Australia, 1915 to 1923.

The scramble to get the Labour representatives to Paris quickly indicated the War Cabinet's resolve to build a solid case for the British scheme before the Peace Conference. Shackleton at the MoL was alerted to Barnes' request for three TUC and PLP representatives to arrive within days at the Prime Minister's behest.⁶³ The full, hastily assembled, Labour Party and TUC delegation comprised C W Bowerman,⁶⁴ G H Stuart-Bunning,⁶⁵ Robert Shirkie,⁶⁶ Arthur Henderson and J H Thomas.⁶⁷ Stuart-Bunning recalled having no opportunity to circulate a brief, testifying to the difficulty they had completing their trio: Shirkie was conscripted with two hours' notice simply for being present when Barnes' telegram arrived.⁶⁸ Henderson was in Switzerland arranging the Berne conference⁶⁹ and diverted Thomas who was in transit.⁷⁰ There was surprise at the sudden redirection of Henderson and Thomas, neither of whom were TUC Parliamentary Committee members.⁷¹ The Foreign Office, War Trade Intelligence Department⁷² and Lord Curzon,⁷³ were all advised to expedite their travel.⁷⁴ George Lansbury⁷⁵ also travelled from Berne to Paris with Henderson and Thomas. The three met informally with Barnes, but there are no notes of these meetings.⁷⁶

⁶³ ILO 1.08.D05.1. copy; TNA FO 608/239/82

⁶⁴ Charles William Bowerman (1851-1947) TUC parliamentary committee member c. 1897, co-founding member of the 1900 LRC; privy councillor and TUC organiser c. 1916 et al; see appendices

⁶⁵ George Harold Stuart-Bunning (1870–1951); Federation of Postal Workers Secretary; involved in the formation of the Union of Post Office Workers and the Civil Service federation, et al; see appendices.

⁶⁶ Robert Shirkie (1869- ?) TUC PLP, Secretary of National Federation of Colliery Enginemen and Boilermen; see appendices.

⁶⁷ James Henry (Jimmy, J.H.) Thomas (1874–1949), National Union of Railwaymen, TUC Chairman 1919-20; IFTU President, 1920-4; see appendices.

⁶⁸ ILO 1.11.D10, Stuart-Bunning to Gillies 26.11.31

⁶⁹ ILO 1.08.D05.1. copy telegram

⁷⁰ TNA FO 608/239/84-5; the Berne Conference was already re-scheduled for 3rd February by then.

⁷¹ ILO 1.11.D10, Stuart-Bunning to Gillies, 26.11.31

⁷² 'Mr Pinckney', TNA FO 608/239/82

⁷³ George Nathaniel Curzon, Marquess Curzon of Kedleston (1859–1925), Unionist member of the Cabinet, ex-viceroy of India, Foreign Office et al; stayed in London while Balfour went to Paris with the Peace Delegation; see appendices.

⁷⁴ ILO 1.08.D05; copy telegram Balfour to Curzon

⁷⁵ George Lansbury (1859-1940) Editor, *Daily Herald* c. 1919; not an MP since 1912 (ex-Bow and Bromley) held virtually every local public office since 1893; see appendices

⁷⁶ *The Daily Mirror*, 27.1.19

Several definitive technical aspects of the scheme were introduced, refined and carried forward, and the concise meeting records captured some of the more important changes, for example in the composition and role of the Governing Body, giving it a more administrative role, which was largely instigated by Henderson.⁷⁷ He was also responsible for the reference to the prevention of unemployment in the Labour Convention's Preamble.⁷⁸ Stuart-Bunning proposed a stipulation that once 'ideal or minimum standards' were attained, nothing would prevent a country from legislating further, and that 'each state would be free to adopt such better conditions as it sought fit.'⁷⁹ Sir Malcolm reported after the first meeting with the Labour representatives that things were 'moving fairly fast', remarking that 'Barnes had taken charge of the (labour) question' before his arrival, gaining Lloyd George's approval to carry on independently more or less as he saw fit.⁸⁰ The League of Nations section had also agreed to their proposals, and Sir Malcolm was confident that things would be pushed along 'as rapidly as possible.'⁸¹

Once the Dominion leaders were brought in, however, clouds began to appear on the horizon. Canada's Borden presaged one of the Commission's greatest hurdles, suggesting that federal states such as Canada, Australia and America might have trouble applying the scheme, but he 'considered that the difficulty could be overcome.'⁸² Sir William Lloyd of Newfoundland⁸³ then suggested it be made clear that the Dominions were each entitled to representation as separate states at the Labour Conference.⁸⁴

⁷⁷ ILO 1.08.D05.2, 28.1.19

⁷⁸ ILO 1.08.D05.2, 27.1.19 (prev.day)

⁷⁹ Ibid

⁸⁰ ILO 1.11.D02, 27.1.19; MD to Sir Edward Troup

⁸¹ Ibid

⁸² ILO 1.08.D06.1, 27.1.19

⁸³ William Lloyd (1864-1937) British Empire Delegation, Liberal Prime Minister of Newfoundland, 1918-19 and newspaper editor.

⁸⁴ ILO 1.08.D06.1, 27.1.19

India's representative Kershaw⁸⁵ proposed twenty-four members for the Governing Body, equally divided between Government, employer and employee with eight each in an equilibrium the TUC supported.⁸⁶ Barnes pointed out that 'it would be impossible to defend this scheme' if the Allies felt their power was somehow compromised, referencing the rationale for the plural vote, but, after much disagreement, he drew the conversation to a close. The record bluntly noted 'the principle of labour representation had been agreed to.'⁸⁷

On the final day, the proposed agenda topics for the first Conference were removed owing to time constraints, and numerous changes to the Preamble were dropped and substituted, with the caveat that it would eventually 'include within its scope all subjects' that a Conference might determine.⁸⁸ The Prime Ministers of Canada, Australia and New Zealand reportedly 'wished the scheme every success' as the session closed.⁸⁹ The British draft was ready for the International Labour Commission's reception, and Sir Malcolm remarked that the Preamble had become 'rather flowery but the labour people like it.'^{90,91} A keen British labour section and a somewhat less enthusiastic Dominion group had found enough agreement to pass the draft, and Barnes's coordination and direction significantly eased some of the Commission's initial work.

Stuart-Bunning's criticisms some years later insinuated that Phelan's minutes were severely edited. After seeing them, he expressed his upset to Gillies, claiming the

⁸⁵ Mr. L Kershaw, C.S.I, C.I.E; labour commission delegate; Secretary of the financial and statistical section of the India Office. (little information available)

⁸⁶ ILO 1.08.D06.2, 28.1.19

⁸⁷ Ibid

⁸⁸ ILO 1.08.D06.4, 29.1.19

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ ILO 1.09.D03; *British Delegation bulletin to the PC*, 29.1.19

⁹¹ ILO 1.11.D02, 27.1.19, op cit.

Preamble showed little of the British Labour group's input, bearing the mark of American influence despite their not being involved. He said it was 'in practically the form in which it left the British Empire committee except for the reference to Labour not being a commodity...

When I saw the phrase I objected that it was meaningless, and was told that was why it was inserted. It meant nothing and pleased the chairman of the Peace Treaty Committee, Samuel Gompers.⁹²

He was also surprised and upset to see how Kershaw's suggestion for equal, tripartite representation on the Governing Body was dismissed, citing the irrational fear of voting 'blocs' which was a phenomenon he had never witnessed while serving on the Governing Body.⁹³

From the end of January 1919, Barnes took full charge of the ILO scheme's progression, assisted by Sir Malcolm, Phelan and Butler. Phelan recalled Barnes' sudden impact, having earlier 'wondered more than once whether he had the energy, political ability and intelligence to drive our scheme successfully through the peace conference', yet he was soon impressed with his 'quiet firmness': -

Until now he had made no positive contribution to its elaboration; he had listened patiently until he had fully understood what was proposed and then he had given his agreement in the fewest possible words... Now that he had, for the first time, taken an important decision without the concurrence of his official advisers, I saw that I had underestimated his quality. This view was confirmed by the steps which he now took on his own initiative to obtain the support of the British workers and employers, and of the dominions, for the plan.⁹⁴

⁹² ILO 1.11.D10, Stuart-Bunning in 1931 to Gillies

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Phelan memoir, p.151

Barnes confidently issued a press statement declaring ‘that full weight has been given to the views of organised British trade unionism’,⁹⁵ something he often referred to when challenged by the American members of the Commission, discussed below. It was reported that the British plans would ‘assure far better conditions than hitherto for the working classes of the world over’ and were ‘more sweeping than those of any other country’, based on remarks from unnamed Allied representatives.⁹⁶ On January 31st, the full BED unanimously approved the scheme, and, as Phelan observed, amidst so much negative press coming out of Paris at the time, it was seen worldwide as a very positive development.⁹⁷

Conclusions

Barnes was resolved to fulfil his electoral pledge as the Government’s representative in Paris and ensure British Labour’s influence on the post-war settlement. He demonstrated his commitment to the Party’s aims despite his divergence from them. Barnes effectively channelled his League to Abolish War ethos, insisting that the Peace Conference’s commitment to labour was an expression of mass representation and the acknowledgment of the decisions of independent congresses. The threat of industrial militancy was used to persuade the War Cabinet to announce a policy much as the TUC used Baden’s declaration to push the issue. Barnes’ personal feelings about containing revolutionary action and the Bolshevik mindset chimed with popular sentiment, as well as the majority Labour Party opinion supportive of a ‘responsible’ worker’s movement. Assertions that Barnes was ‘right wing labour’ are easily challenged through careful consideration of his actions and motivations. He was not out of step with the bulk of his

⁹⁵ *The Daily Mirror*, ‘Great Labour Plan. Full Weight Given to Views of British Leaders’, 30.1.19

⁹⁶ *Ibid*

⁹⁷ Phelan memoir, p.151

Party contemporaries nor did he depart from the ‘spirit of the Labour Movement’ as Maxton contended; he departed from minority views in the party.

Meeting notes, surviving rough drafts and anecdotal recollections from this period of the creation of the Labour Convention help to flesh out a fuller picture than official records allow. While personal testimonies are colourful, they can of course be unreliable and contradictory. Testimony from Phelan and Shotwell did speak to Barnes’ affable yet direct nature, and his quiet, firm resolve to complete the task to which he was assigned and so strongly believed in. The TUC-Dominions joint sessions demonstrated that serving both Empire and the working classes was, and would remain, complicated. Barnes undoubtedly took advantage of his political position, to give positive expression to the desires of the working classes and expand his role in ways he had not previously anticipated. World labour might have initially appeared the least controversial of the Peace Conference’s agenda items, but the announcement of the Commission a positive development which sought to address issues political and economic as well as social. The Labour Convention for the ILO soon developed controversies of its own, and Barnes balanced the demands of international diplomacy against the limits of constitutional democracy in an unprecedented setting in a unique way.

3 The Labour Commission

Barnes and International Diplomacy

It can be argued that Barnes' transformation from oft-struggling domestic British politician to international spokesman for organised labour began in earnest during the final months of 1918 in Britain, and his elevated profile and involvement in a number of Peace Conference delegations in Paris in early 1919 further crystallised this transition. The International Labour Commission appointed by the Peace Conference on January 31 held its first meeting the next morning, composed of two members each from the five great powers and five apiece from the others.¹ Barnes and the British delegation sat at the head of the table with their fleshed-out draft scheme for labour's global reorganisation. President Wilson's surprise appointment of the American Federation of Labor (AFL) leader Samuel Gompers and his counterpart, Mr A.N. Hurley, a shipping employer² to the Commission soon became problematic for a number of reasons. Phelan recalled that in particular, the Americans' lack of political or legal experience suggested 'some confusion in the American delegation concerning the task which the Commission was expected to perform.'³ It had been assumed that participating labour delegations would dispatch national Governmental representatives 'familiar with labour law and administration',⁴ and the British delegation naturally expected Barnes, the only plenipotentiary of the great powers appointed to the

¹ Primary members: Great Britain: Barnes, Harold Butler and Sir Malcolm Delevingne; the United States: Gompers, A. N. Hurley was replaced by Henry M Robinson; France: Pierre Colliard, Arthur Fontaine, Louis Loucher; Italy: Baron Mayor des Planches, M.A. Cabrini; Belgium: Emile Vandervelde, Ernest Mahaim; Poland: Count Zoltowski, Stanislas Patek; Czechoslovakia: Edvard Benes, Rudolph Broz; Cuba: Antonio Sánchez de Bustamante, and Japan: Kentaro Otchiai, Minoru Oka.

² (Hon) A. N. (Ernest) Hurley (1864-1933) American manufacturer, financier and author; chairman of the United States Shipping Board and president of the Emergency Fleet Corporation, 1914-19, World War Funding Commission, et al.

³ Phelan memoir, p.156

⁴ *Origins*, vol I, p.129

Commission, to preside over it. The British were further ‘disconcerted’ by the immediate, impromptu nomination by the French delegation’s Pierre Colliard⁵ of Gompers for Chairman during the first session.⁶

To some extent, differing American, British and European perceptions and experiences of socialism and trade unionism underpinned many of the Labour Commission struggles Barnes and his colleagues endured. Barnes' challenge in leading the Commission was undoubtedly complicated by the Gompers appointment, for the AFL leader was conflicted. He had initially landed in London to meet with the British TUC on January 17 1919, convinced he would be involved in establishing a new international trade union that operated independent of State involvement. Instead, he was soon appointed by his President to head a world labour commission stacked with European cabinet members (many of whom were prominent socialists) with the goal of establishing a permanent labour institution directly involving governmental participation - anathema to the AFL’s guiding principle.⁷

The Gompers Presidency

Some examination of Samuel Gompers’ background is helpful towards better understanding of how rapidly changing and complex ideas about ‘internationalism’ affected the Paris 1919 labour commission, and how Barnes sought to manage the tricky situation before him. He recalled Gompers affectionately in his memoir -

Sam exhibited at Paris but little signs of advancing age except that his one-time raven locks had gone, and left only little tufts of grey on an otherwise

⁵ Pierre Colliard (1852–1925) French Republican-Socialist Party Minister of Labour, 1917-20; A Vice-President of the Labour Commission; Chamber of Deputies member, 1898-1919.

⁶ Phelan memoir, p.156

⁷ ‘American Federation of Labor Mission is Taking Lead in Shaping Peace Congress Action’, M. Woll in *The American Federationist*, (Washington DC: March 1919), xxxvi, p.226; Woll, the President of the International Photo-Engravers Union, wrote this in early February 1919 upon the Commissions’ formation.

bald head suggestive of a moulting eagle... He is a born talker and talks uncommonly well, but, like most talkers, he likes to talk. He had a quaint way of presiding over our proceedings of stepping aside from the chair now and again to 'present a thought' that generally meant a ten minutes' oration in which the thought would be clothed in measured and ornate terms.⁸

Barnes first met Gompers in 1902, and his familiarity with American ways was crucial, especially as Gompers' views were often lost on the bulk of the Commission members.

Butler recalled the 'bewildering effect' brought on by an unfamiliar American dimension, noting the importance of those casual evenings the British spent with Shotwell and his colleagues: '...but for such dinner conversations... I doubt whether we should ever have understood the difficulties with which our labour proposals confronted the Americans. Without contact, pure reason is a blunt instrument of negotiation.'⁹

None of us realised what a different type of Western civilisation had grown up in the United States during the nineteenth century, how under American conditions a different social philosophy and a different political system had been evolved... this was the first time since its early years that the American Republic had intruded on European affairs... A new force had entered into world politics, which most Europeans were quite unable to estimate...¹⁰

By contrast Barnes had a decent understanding of cross-Atlantic socio-political differences, having travelled extensively in the United States more than once. He first gained exposure to American ideals and industrial ways in 1902, touring and recording data for the Mosely Industrial Commission,¹¹ and attending the National Civic Federation ('NCF') Conference during the height of the country's 'progressive era.'^{12,13}

⁸ Barnes, *FWWC*, p.246

⁹ Butler, *Confident Morning*, p.161; he mentioned Shotwell, Bowman, Professor Haskins 'and others.'

¹⁰ Ibid, p.162

¹¹ Oct-Dec. 1902, twenty-one British TUC delegates and labour leaders toured North America. Funded by the South African diamond merchant Alfred Mosley, the high-profile expedition sought ways to keep Britain from becoming 'a third-rate commercial Power' as American exports boomed. Source: *The Spectator*, 30 August 1902. (Spectator Archives online @ archive.spectator.co.uk), p.279; Mosely was a key speaker at that year's NCF Conference.

¹² Cocks, Holloran et al (eds) *Historical Dictionary of the Progressive Era* (Maryland, USA: 2009 Scarecrow Press)

During the Mosely tour, Barnes met with individuals across all industrial levels and political ranks in many industrial centres and ports. His in-depth Report showed an understanding of the attitudes of American workers and employers, and a realistic grasp of the United States' role in labour affairs and legislative functions.

Despite a shared commitment to raised standards for workers welfare, there were core divergences in labour ideology and trade union practice. Differing historical ideas about the role of the state versus voluntarism in industrial relations were at the core of some of their difficulties.¹⁴ Gompers' deep-seated commitment to voluntarism and political neutrality in labour affairs expressed the ethos of the AFL's Charter, as discussed, while the British Labour Party was formed specifically as the political expression of the Trade Union movement inside Parliament. Furthermore, across Europe the war had increased State and political intervention, and moderate Socialist governments had made advances. The Commission had to span an ideological chasm shaped by disparate political landscapes.

Gompers was disturbed by the strong link between British trade unions and the political Labour Party, and wary of the socialist influence on European governments. He felt the British might try to engineer a new, supranational body in collusion with the Europeans that could be usurped by political influence and drive statutory legislation. Labour legislation enforced by international Treaty not only betrayed the notion of voluntarism, but Gompers also perceived a form of extended economic colonialism in the British draft, crafted to suit their specific needs: -

¹³ Formed in 1900, the relatively progressive alternative to the National Association of Manufacturers sought co-operative solutions to see off strikes. It comprised members of the public and a bipartisan mix of politicians, as well as reform-minded businessmen, bank, railroad and utility owners, and AFL members.

¹⁴ See Rehmus, *Labour and American Politics: a book of readings*, chapter 4, pp.83-93 re: the evolution of US voluntarism

The British did not oppose the principle of super-government, but sought protection by establishing through colonial representation a control within the agency that would enable them to make satisfactory changes later.¹⁵

He admitted his conflict from the start, convinced that the United States Senate and Congress would reject the ILO's 'invasion' of their treaty-making power, and constantly feared that 'our work would be used as an argument against the League of Nations which President Wilson considered essential to carrying out his policies': -¹⁶

Time and time again I felt that the situation with the International Labour Commission was impossible and that no constructive results could be secured, but, on the other hand, I felt constrained to stay by the work because my withdrawal would react to the detriment of the purposes of President Wilson.¹⁷

Under uncomfortable conditions, Gompers had to lead an International Labour Commission as a high-profile delegate to the Peace Conference, supporting its higher aims but not its immediate, specific mission. However the Gompers appointment was a boon in one respect: it freed Barnes, so well-acquainted with the scheme's minutiae, to focus his attention on steering the draft through the Commission to completion, a 'by no means easy task which he performed with admirable parliamentary skill': -

Barnes was never at a loss and members of the Commission were constantly amazed at the way in which he could sum up a discussion which had roved back and forth in the most confusing fashion, and lucidly set out the essential points at issue.¹⁸

Italian and British Cooperation

Barnes was appointed Vice President of the Commission on February 4 and the British draft, the most advanced text and the only one circulated in both French and English, was adopted as the basis for immediate discussion (with some minor

¹⁵ Gompers, *Seventy Years*, p.490

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ Ibid, p.491

¹⁸ TNA FO 608/238/90

reservations) upon his motion.¹⁹ The British were undoubtedly confident that the French delegation would support this motion, since French and British officials long held similar ideas about the direction organised labour should take, and 1906 and 1913 Berne Conference delegates Arthur Fontaine (Commission General Secretary)²⁰ and Sir Malcolm confidentially compared Paris notes from November 1918.²¹ Italian support, however, was not so easily presumed and had to be secured during several earlier, private meetings ahead of time. These meetings made it further apparent that Barnes' transition from advisor on domestic working class matters into international labour negotiator and diplomat was well under way.

Although not considered a state of industrial importance, the Italian delegation altered the Commission's course beyond its original remit owing to national matters and concerns about militant labour. Italy's Signor Cabrini²² made clear that his delegation would only support the British plan if matters of particular interest to his country, which included territory, the eight-hours day, and labour emigration, were later discussed in depth. The February pact between the British and the Italians was largely responsible for the introduction of the specific points in the 'labour clauses', also known as the Labour Charter, for inclusion in the Peace Treaty in March.²³ The repercussions of the Anglo-Italian agreement were not immediately obvious, but the controversy around the Labour Charter lingered and presented Barnes with some of his most difficult challenges which are discussed in a subsequent chapter. It is important to note how

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ Arthur Fontaine (1860-1931) French engineer, Assistant Secretary to the Labour Commission; Director, French Ministry for Labour, 1899-1920; co-founder of the IALL, 1900; Berne Conference delegate 1906 and 1913; see appendices.

²¹ ILO 1.10.F01-6, correspondence 11.19-1.19; Sir Malcolm stated that neither Barnes nor the British Ministry of Labour knew about his efforts to secure France's preliminary support: Shotwell note in ILO file 27.

²² M A (Angiolo) Cabrini (1869-1937) Italian Labour Commission member, Commission Deputy and Vice-President of Italy's Supreme Labour Council.

²³ TNA FO 608/239/55-60

deeply concerned Italy was over clauses in Wilson's Fourteen Points which would nullify the Treaty of London (1915), the agreement that persuaded Italy to leave the Triple Alliance to fight with the Triple Entente by promising them large swathes of Northern land upon victory.²⁴

During the first of the Anglo-Italian meetings, Cabrini warned that Italian and French labour would both 'suffer severe disillusion' if the Commission merely established conference machinery. He informed the British that Italian employers were prepared to accept 'progressive measures' for labour, in fear of 'something worse', inferring revolution. Cabrini suggested that Britain and Italy together introduce the points for discussion, since Italy's relatively weak industrial position might give the impression of them 'adopting a pose.'²⁵ On territorial matters, Cabrini advised Barnes that the Italian proletariat were anti-imperialist, and that the masses had little or no interest in Anatolia and Smyrna. He remarked candidly that he would prefer 'nothing to do' with them 'provided that England and France would adopt the same attitude.'²⁶ He felt that annexation should only extend to the Italian-speaking regions, excluding northern areas which would maintain Allied control of the Brenner Pass. When Barnes commented that this would involve Italian rule of some 200,000 Germans, Cabrini suggested that this could protect against invasion.²⁷ He said his people were 'quite prepared to allow the German population autonomy under Italian control', citing the

²⁴ The April 1915 Treaty of London is available online at the WWI Archive :
< [https://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/The_Treaty_of_London_\(1915\)](https://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/The_Treaty_of_London_(1915)) > accessed 9.12.16

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ TNA FO 608/239/60: how or whether this affected British foreign policy is beyond this thesis' scope.

²⁷ The northern boundary between Austria and Italy; became shared territory with Austria via the Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye (Sept. 1919), storing up problems for later.

‘democratic freedoms’ enjoyed in the French-speaking districts as ‘a sufficient guarantee that full liberty would be accorded to their new subjects.’²⁸

Barnes informed Lloyd George confidentially the next morning that on territory, the Italian masses were largely unconcerned save ‘the upper part of the Adriatic and the hinterland up to the Brenner.’²⁹ Just ahead of the February 4 Commission sitting, Butler and Sir Malcolm again met privately with Cabrini as well as Signor Mayor des Planches.³⁰ A short meeting note only recorded the Italians’ expression of their ‘entire approval’ for the British draft, its few lines capturing their statement with the reservation that they were ‘free to raise other matters, such as the eight-hour day and emigration in which they were particularly interested.’³¹ The Italians presented their declaration to the Labour Commission that afternoon, after which Gompers made his first announcement of many that the AFL had also ‘drawn up a certain number of propositions’ for the Treaty.^{32,33} The British met privately with the Italians again a few days later when their desires were further discussed, which interestingly included the universal ‘democratisation of industry’ as detailed in the British Whitley Scheme. During that session, Cabrini reported that his delegation felt Gompers’ proposals were too ‘philosophical in character’ and ‘outside the terms of reference of the Commission’,³⁴ an argument used by Barnes and others later in the discussions.

This evidence is compelling on several counts: for one, the records show how the Italians and the British engaged in political horse-trading and came to a number of

²⁸ TNA FO 608/239/57

²⁹ TPA DLG/F/4/3/2

³⁰ Baron Edmondo Mayor des Planches (1851-1920) Italian labour delegation; Italian Ambassador to the Peace Conference and Commissioner-General for Emigration.

³¹ TNA FO 608/239/51

³² ‘Statement of Italian Delegation Preliminary to the General Discussion of the British Draft Convention’ 4.4.19, reprinted in *Origins* vol. II, p.327 (doc. 36)

³³ TNA FO 608/239/91; America was a high-wage economy thus reduction of working hours’ abroad was in their interest, he also stressed the eight-hour day as a priority.

³⁴ ILO 1.11 D.07.3

decisions behind closed doors. It can be argued that British backing for the Italian labour declaration and their specific concerns may have been a reward for joining the Allies, and for the exchange of information on how a militant proletariat might view territorial decisions.³⁵ A full review of the political ramifications of these meetings would make for interesting further research, but for the sake of this exercise only the implications for Barnes and the Labour Commission are delineated. This evidence also underscores the importance of Barnes to the War Cabinet and Lloyd George, and from Barnes' perspective, it may help to explain why he ultimately supported the controversial Labour Charter despite his personal belief that it was unnecessary. These documents also challenge the prevailing view in some American histories of the Peace Conference that Samuel Gompers' passionate yet oft-misplaced oratory was the key factor underpinning the Labour Charter's guaranteed place in the Treaty.³⁶

Czechoslovakia and Japan

The British delegation also met with Dr Benes of the Czech delegation³⁷ on the evening of February 4, when the opinion of the proletariat was also considered. Benes stressed the 'bad effect' the plural vote (where the State representative at the labour conference receives two votes compared to labour and capital's one apiece) would have on the Czech working classes.³⁸ Sir Malcolm's rationale was that the plural vote would give governments an investment in the labour conference, since they undertook the obligation of carrying out the conventions. Benes insisted that the Czech workers would

³⁵ The partition of the Ottoman Empire again threatened the region three months later; the Allies authorised Greek occupation of Smyrna; precursor to the bloody Greco-Turkish war in Anatolia, 1919-22.

³⁶ Shotwell diary, pp. 211-2; American Peace Conference and ILO histories that recorded this popular narrative include *What really happened at Paris* (1921), op cit., and *Making the World Safe for Labor* (2013), pp.210-1, 213-4, op cit.

³⁷ Edvard Beneš (1884-1948), Czech labour delegation and Foreign Minister; see appendices.

³⁸ The 'plural vote' controversy is discussed below.

already see governmental conference delegates as ‘representatives of the bourgeoisie.’ He concurred with the Italians that a Treaty declaration of specific points was desired, similarly stressing the universalization of the eight-hour day, since it was already standard in his country. Czech labourers would otherwise suffer, and industrial competition from Germany in particular would weaken the provisional Czech-Slovak Government.³⁹ It was crucially important that the emerging Czech voice be heard, potentially explaining a seemingly out-of-place remark Benes made on the Commission’s first day: he reportedly ‘emphasised the industrial importance of the Czecho-Slovak Republic which comprised the greater part of the industrial production of the former Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.’⁴⁰ This statement may have suffered through translation by an interpreter, as Shotwell’s records often complained, or through selective reporting by the British secretariat as comparison with the American records showed, nonetheless it is an understandable sentiment given the context.⁴¹

A British meeting with the Japanese labour delegation the next day revealed their particular concerns. It was argued that such an intricate scheme as composed by the economically-advanced Europeans would be challenging to apply to Japan’s vastly different industrial conditions. In ‘some detail’ they explained their objection to the imposition of the eight-hour day, noting that Japanese workers spent many long hours in the factory, but their whole time was not ‘engaged in actual work.’⁴² In subsequent Labour Commission sessions and later Peace Conference sittings the lines between labour matters and issues of national identity increasingly blurred and complicated the

³⁹ TNA FO 608/239/53; The provisional Government was formed in October 1918 after being recognised by the Allies during July and August; subsequently on 11 March, Broz submitted a memorandum moving for the principle of an eight-hour day; FO 608/239/442

⁴⁰ TNA FO/608/238/88

⁴¹ The American ‘Graves’ minutes of the LC in the Columbia Shotwell collection do not include the 1st day’s proceedings, referenced from this point as COL 114/JTG

⁴² ILO 1.11 D07.5

scheme's progress, further delineating the complicated yet necessary duality of Barnes' shifting responsibilities. As the Peace Treaty's signing neared, his labour responsibility was increasingly eclipsed by international relations difficulties as later chapters discuss. The records of these early, private meetings with the smaller powers demonstrate how Barnes negotiated with multiple entities to shape and advance the British scheme toward its passage, and how satisfying the demands of world labour through industrial regulation after the war was used as a tool of high diplomacy.

The British Scheme's First Reading

The initial test for Barnes and his British colleagues was to justify their draft scheme's proposed structures and their underlying principles. Enduring sticking points included (but were not limited to) the distribution of the vote at the annual Labour Conference, whether such a Conference would supersede national sovereignty, the constitutionality of the proposed scheme in nations with a federated government structure, and whether it respected the autonomy and national identity of all self-governing entities – all matters of grave significance as the world was being recast in the shadow of the war. A number of concessions were made to the Labour Convention ('Convention' from here) along the way to prevent insurmountable impasses, and of equal importance, present the appearance of consensus before the Peace Conference. It bears repeating that the International Labour Commission was not created to establish specific world labour standards owing not least to differing industrial and legislative conditions. National priorities and concerns nevertheless impacted the overall 'international' nature of the document that became Chapter XIII ('The Labour Chapter') of the Versailles Peace Treaty.

Samuel Gompers recalled in his memoir his immediate discomfort with how the British had taken charge early on: ‘The British delegation had prepared proposals which had been circulated in both French and English before the second meeting and these served as the basis for all discussion. In a perfectly obvious way that draft controlled the thinking of the conference and it certainly made my task more difficult and unpleasant.’⁴³ His outsider perspective was made evident in the American minutes of the Labour Commission sessions, owing to an oft-differing emphasis from that of the official British records which most heavily informed Shotwell’s *Origins*.⁴⁴ The British record, for example, omitted Gompers’ remark that ‘the adoption of the English plan was not intended to exclude the use of the French plan’, whereas it is preserved in the American record by comparison.⁴⁵ However the British scheme’s first reading and general discussion of its aims resulted in its acceptance in principle as the Labour Convention for the International Labour Organisation’s founding document.

The Power of the Conference Vote: Articles III and IV

The constitution of the Labour Conference vote as detailed in Articles III and IV was the first and one of the most persistent sticking points the Commission faced, inspiring prolonged, passionate debates about democracy and the role of the State in labour affairs. Article III determined that for each nation there would be a Conference delegate representing each the State, the workers and the employers, and Article IV established the distribution of votes between them, giving the State delegate two votes, the ‘plural vote’ as described. The Czech delegate Dr Benes argued that the State

⁴³ Gompers, *Seventy Years*, p.489

⁴⁴ Shotwell (and Reigelman) compared the British, American and Belgian minutes (in French) in 1934’s all-encompassing work *Origins of the International Labor Organization* (passim, introduction), reproducing the British record of the thirty-four sittings; The Graves record ends on March 11 1919. The French record, published in France in 1923, is noted in *Origins* vol. II, p.149

⁴⁵ COL 114/ JTG(2) 4.2.19; session numbers and dates are included from this point.

representative should only have one (single) vote in order for it to be democratic, fair and effective (referred to as '1:1:1').

The paradoxical nature of Gompers' Presidential role became apparent when he immediately voiced his distaste for a labour conference granting the State delegate more than one vote, and his bitterness toward it steadily grew throughout the proceedings. Gompers agreed with Dr Benes, declaring that the plural vote united employers and the State against labour, their natural opponent, asserting that 'in almost every case the employers and the workmen would vote in different senses.'⁴⁶ Barnes responded with an economic justification for the plural vote, arguing that the greater sense of obligation it bestowed on the State could help fund the Conference, especially in the case of powerful nations. Gompers rejected his theory, since 'the question of money could not determine the matter of votes.'⁴⁷ Typifying his pervasive Commission role, Barnes moved to end the first reading's general discussion in order to review the draft article by article.⁴⁸ The British and American records both noted that Gompers at that stage read aloud a number of specific labour points the AFL wanted included in the Treaty. The American minutes alone recorded his statement that 'the American delegation of labour... had full power of adopting or rejecting questions relative to labour problems.'⁴⁹ The scheme's first reading drew to a close indicating that clashes over vital principles and power struggles might be on the horizon.

The Fraught Second Reading

The ultimate goal of the scheme's second reading was to find consensus and forge a complete draft Labour Convention by February 28, when the Commission

⁴⁶ TNA FO 608/238/92 (3) 5.2.19

⁴⁷ COL 114/ JTG(3), 5.2.19

⁴⁸ TNA FO 608/238/92 (3) 5.2.19

⁴⁹ COL 114/ JTG(3), 5.2.19

would take a ten-day recess while participating national governments considered their Report. During the second reading the draft articles were individually debated. Their discussion explicitly revealed numerous ideological and political divisions between the American, British and European delegations. Barnes and the British were usually caught awkwardly in the middle, trying to keep their scheme intact while making concessions to satisfy numerous divergent opinions and priorities. The emotional pitch of heated exchanges between Barnes and Gompers escalated as the latter's deeply embedded distrust of the State's involvement in labour matters and distaste for socialist ideology surfaced. As the other delegations naturally defended their own interests, matters grew increasingly complicated. The full Article III and IV debates as Shotwell analysed them in depth served as good case studies for better understanding of the diffuse and divergent threads of international Trade Unionist and Socialist thought as they stood at the time. This thesis offers a summary of how these debates represented differences in transnational practices and ideologies at the war's end, and how Barnes' personal trajectory may have been affected. Gompers was particularly passionate since he felt only the American delegation could defend organised labour: to his mind, only the AFL's vision of trade unionism based on voluntarism and freedom from political intervention defensible.

To counter criticisms that the plural vote was undemocratic by favouring the State, Barnes presented an Article III amendment devised by Belgium's Emile Vandervelde⁵⁰ which added a *second* State delegate with their own vote. This became known as '2:1:1' and naturally remained the British preference.⁵¹ The avowed Belgian socialist Vandervelde explained that 2:1:1 gave equal voting power to the employer and

⁵⁰ Emile Vandervelde (1866-1938); Socialist Belgian labour delegate, Belgian Minister of Justice, 1918-21, et al; see appendices.

⁵¹ TNA FO 608/238/97 (4) 6.2.19

worker combined, matching the government's power.⁵² He rejected allegations from French and American delegates that governments always represented capitalist interests because in his experience they 'frequently adopted, at least partially, the point of view of the working class against that of the employers.'⁵³ Nonetheless Gompers was vehement that 2:1:1 gave the State an automatic veto over proposed legislation at the Conference. It was an unnecessary provision, he argued, since 'there was plenty of veto power in their respective governments' to reject adopted conventions.⁵⁴ In typically dramatic fashion, Gompers insinuated that by adopting 2:1:1, the Commission would have 'lost its opportunity to better the conditions of the working people: -

...If the government has a dominating voting power our workers will be left out and standing alone, and will say to us, the members of this Commission, that it is another capitalistically controlled affair... as a rule, governments appoint delegates whose sympathy is against the labouring class, and it is obvious that labour would stand alone if the British system of plural voting was adopted.⁵⁵

He insinuated the scheme was out-of-date, declaring 'we did not want to find conditions in a rut as before... we were living in a new era and we should do all in our power to protect human life and freedom of the working man.'⁵⁶

At that stage, the French delegations' persistent lack of coordination became problematic. Phelan's recollection noted that it was a 'permanent and disconcerting feature... it was not uncommon for one of them to strongly oppose the thesis that his colleague had defended vigorously the day before.'⁵⁷ Colliard (who was also responsible for Gompers' presidential nomination) jumped to the AFL leader's defence,

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ TNA FO 608/238/97 (4) 6.2.19.

⁵⁴ COL 114/ JTG(4), 6.2.19

⁵⁵ Ibid

⁵⁶ Ibid

⁵⁷ Phelan memoir, p.157

contradicting the position his counterpart Loucher took during the previous session.⁵⁸

During the Commission's fourth meeting a recurring trend for the coming weeks was established: the United States and one half of the French delegation opposed the British, Belgians, Poles and Czechs, while the Italians vacillated, requesting assurances that they could discuss giving the labour conference virtually statutory powers at a time of their choosing. The Italian vision of a 'European super-parliament' provoked outcry from the American delegation, and became a permanent source of disagreement (discussed below). The Japanese delegation, meanwhile, refrained from much comment unless they had received orders from their Government, while the Cuban delegation backed the Americans whenever constitutional matters arose since the two nations shared a federated national structure. This epitomised the quagmire of conflicting ideologies, practices and national constitutions Barnes sought to navigate.

The comparatively soft-spoken Barnes held his own during at least one 'very heated set-to' with Gompers over 2:1:1, with others 'joining the fray'⁵⁹ on February 7. Shotwell's personal diary recorded that the Belgians' stenographer also noted 'the bitterness of some speakers.'⁶⁰ Gompers proclaimed that if 2:1:1 passed, 'the scheme was foredoomed to failure... it would be useless for the Commission to continue its work.'⁶¹ -

If we formulate a proposition by which the working people will be in a mere insignificant minority, we will have met here entirely in vain. Have we not changed? ...Do we not know that the world is now seething, particularly among the labour classes, for improvement? Shall we not take into account all that has passed in the last few years? The world now is in the remaking

⁵⁸ It is hard to say how much of this is down to the strength of translation or whether he was speaking in English.

⁵⁹ Shotwell diary, p.168

⁶⁰ 'N'est pas etonne de l'ampleur de la discussion mais regretted un peu l'amertume de certains orateurs'; Shotwell papers @ Columbia archive, publishing notes for *Origins* (1934).

⁶¹ *Origins*, vol. 1, p.135

and we must meet adequately the demands of the masses on the government.⁶²

Despite his presidential role, Gompers maintained that employers were complicit in an anti-labour conspiracy, as they ‘never had secured legislation in the interests of the working people... they were always opposed to labour legislation and labour reforms.’⁶³ The debate raged for days, as Gompers adamantly confronted Barnes over the scheme’s power imbalance which ‘struck a blow at the very work this mission was to perform’, while challenging Vandervelde’s ‘favouritism in an increase of power of the State against labour’, something he found shocking. The American records noted Gompers’ comments aimed at Barnes as he threatened to withdraw the AFL from the ILO scheme.⁶⁴ Shotwell recalled an unprecedented incident: -

Mr. Gompers' suspicion of ‘socialist’ thinking on the part of his colleagues on the labour body was never concealed from them, and at this meeting he had practically charged Mr. Barnes with betraying Labour into the hands of government officials. Mr. Barnes' reply had drawn an apology from Gompers, but the question was still in the air.

Barnes delivered a rousing defence in his plain-speaking, matter-of-fact style. Surprised by ‘the heat of the debate’, he nevertheless bristled at accusations that the scheme was anti-labour which ‘cast a reflection on the authors of the British proposition.’⁶⁵ The Parliamentary Committee of the Trades Union Congress, ‘the highest authorities in England on labour questions’, had fully endorsed it.⁶⁶ To make the point that governments were not always hostile to labour, Barnes referenced the Commission’s composition where nations had appointed members of State, prominent Socialists and

⁶² COL 114/ JTG(5) 7.2.19

⁶³ Ibid

⁶⁴ Ibid

⁶⁵ Ibid

⁶⁶ Shotwell diary, pp.168-9

leading labour representatives to find common goals.⁶⁷ His benevolent opinion of the state was clear: ‘...governments were getting more friendly and not more hostile to labour’, and that soon enough, ‘the governments might be run by labour.’⁶⁸ Barnes’ eternal mantra was evident: friendly relations between the Conference and the State would protect workers’ better interests, by balancing labour and capital, while suppressing the potential for militancy. He finally asked Gompers whether his own nation ‘would take up such a proposition with two-thirds of it made up of outside government representation.’⁶⁹ Sir Malcolm also reported on the AFL leader’s ‘outrageous attack’ on the British TUC, remarking that a vote taken right after Barnes’ amusing and ‘most excellent’ speech would have easily carried the 2:1:1 proposal.⁷⁰

Sir Malcolm, Butler and Shotwell met the next morning to discuss preventing a Commission break-up ‘given the heated exchange of personalities.’⁷¹ In 1921, Gompers reflected upon what he saw as a characteristically egotistical British delegation viewpoint: ‘It was to the effect that Socialists shortly would be in control of most of the governments of the world, and therefore the workers would have the majority in all international labor conferences.’⁷²

The British Voting Memorandum

The British delegation demonstrated its technocratic skill through circulation of Sir Malcolm Delevingne’s complex *Memorandum on the Conference vote* (‘voting memo’) on February 12. It explained in depth how 2:1:1 was ‘the most satisfactory’ of

⁶⁷ COL 114/ JTG(5) 7.2.19

⁶⁸ Ibid

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ ILO 1.11.D07, MD to Troup, 9.2.19

⁷¹ Shotwell diary, p.169

⁷² House and Seymour, *What really happened*, op cit., p.322

all the configurations under discussion.⁷³ Written from the perspective of 1906 and 1913 Berne conference attendees (comprising Sir Malcolm and most of the Europeans on the Commission), its over-arching sentiment was that the global working class should form a closer, if not direct, bond with the State, enabled by the Labour Conference as the British draft conceived. Barnes stressed during the voting memo's presentation that the governments of industrialised countries were 'already greatly influenced by the opinions and desires of (British) Labour and will be more so in the future', and that developing economies held similar aspirations. In practical terms, he expressed how the scheme also had to consider nations joining the League and ILO later, including neutrals and former enemies who would reject a Conference without strong State representation. Barnes' main contention was that 2:1:1 could develop the power of labour through increased politicisation in ways that 1:1:1 could not: -

...The institution of an International Labour Organisation (is) to secure International Labour Legislation - in other words, to secure political action from the State for the improvement of labour conditions. Without the support of the State Governments the labours of the Conference will produce no results. The ideal we are aiming at is that, both nationally and internationally, the Governments of the world will use more and more the powers of the State to bring about the improvement of the conditions of labour.⁷⁴

The memo having been circulated, it was decided that the Article III's voting configurations could not be finally determined until Article XVIII's provisions (discussed below) were finalised.⁷⁵ Article XVIII's most contentious clause, 'Each of the High Contracting Parties undertakes that it will within the period of one year from the end of the meeting of the Conference communicate its formal ratification of the

⁷³ TNA FO 608/238/299, 'Memorandum by the British Delegation on the question of voting power at the Conference' (Henceforth 'voting memo')

⁷⁴ Voting memo, op cit.

⁷⁵ Article XVIII determined how the scheme would apply to federated states and this influenced the way the Conference vote impacted upon national sovereignty so Articles III, IV and XVIII were often discussed in tandem.

Convention to the Director and will forthwith take all steps necessary to put the Convention into operation, unless such convention is disproved by its legislature', essentially determined the power of the Labour Conference in relation to national sovereignty. This was a tremendous hurdle for the Commission to clear, and it proved impossible to discuss Articles III (or IV) without touching upon Article XVIII. Circular arguments about sovereignty and constitutionality dominated a great deal of the Commission's time. Article XVIII's implications and trajectory are examined more closely below.

With Article III yet hanging in the balance, Gompers determined that the Commission secretaries record names against votes during divisions on such 'important questions.'⁷⁶ Given his post-Peace Conference remarks about his Labour Commission struggles, this could be interpreted as arising from his desire to document his loyalty to American workers' interests for posterity. Concluding the session, Samuel Gompers circulated the AFL's 1918 pamphlet depicting their ideas for post-war social reconstruction, and as it was Abraham Lincoln's birthday, the fifth American President's virtues were recalled as all rose in a show of respect. The Commission was then suspended for five days while Gompers left Paris.⁷⁷

On February 17 the Commission reassembled to be confronted with a most bold advocate for the 1:1:1 vote composition, France's Leon Jouhaux, head of the CGT (*Confédération Générale du Travail*). French Trade Unionists were already unhappy that French labour was not directly represented on the Commission.⁷⁸ Gompers found an ally in Jouhaux, and reiterated his earlier points, alluding to anti-labour forces which

⁷⁶ Voting memo, op cit.

⁷⁷ TNA FO/608/238/241 (7) 12.2.19

⁷⁸ *Report of the British TUC Conference Sept. 1919*, p.173

indicated his fear that the Third International threatened a takeover of the labouring classes. He believed the ILO could never contain Bolshevism under 2:1:1 since Socialists had permeated European institutions.⁷⁹ He warned there was a ‘dangerous element abroad throughout the world’ and that ‘folly and revolutionary thought, like epidemics, do not stop at international border lines.’⁸⁰ Perhaps sensing that 1:1:1’s defeat loomed, Gompers refused responsibility for any unfortunate outcomes, declaring ‘I will at least be on good terms with my own conscience’. The American minutes recorded that Gompers bestowed upon the Commission a plethora of historical ‘facts’, an oration that the British notes pithily condensed: -

Was it not a fact that, in general, labour legislation had been opposed by employers? Was it not a fact that Governments had been very often opposed to this same legislation, and that it had only been after a bitter struggle and by the danger of revolutions that it had been possible to secure from them little by little the measures which had been obtained up to the present? ...The unrest and agitation of the masses should not be lost sight of. If the Commission did not rise to the height of its opportunity its work would be met with ridicule from the masses, and the consequences might be very grave.⁸¹

Leon Jouhaux was backed by half of the French delegation via Pierre Colliard. Jouhaux nevertheless sensed that he was in the minority despite claiming to speak for the entire French working class, huffing that he ‘saw no good in discussing it.’⁸² The comparative labour-State dynamic in the American and European spheres was then debated at great length. The philosophical deliberations frustrated Barnes greatly, who questioned whether the single vote advocates had misunderstood what they were there to achieve. He insisted that the Labour Conference’s purpose ‘was not to express the

⁷⁹ TNA FO/608/238/272 (9) 17.2.19

⁸⁰ COL 114/JTG (9) 17.2.19

⁸¹ Ibid

⁸² Ibid

aspirations of labour, but to realise them' through 'some sanction, some authority to give due effect' to them: -

Pious aspirations have done precious little; what has been accomplished has been done through pressure on our own governments... We are now called upon to make a new departure – to bring voluntary organisations into willing accomplishment with the states.⁸³

He also explained pragmatically that their Labour Convention had to please the heads of state attending the Peace Conference, arguing that the scheme was already very progressive. Barnes contended that the Peace Conference might refuse it unless Governments had a significant stake in it, lest the 'the principles of State sovereignty' be clearly infringed.⁸⁴ His practicality arose from his experience of dealing with the likes of the Imperial War Cabinet, and knowing how the Labour Convention might appear to men like Lloyd George and Clemenceau. Barnes remained adamant that improved working standards would result through coordination with the State, while Gompers proclaimed he would never change his stand, regardless of what his own Government might think. He proclaimed he would rather send the Peace Conference a 'bold scheme' to be rejected outright, instead of a 'moderate proposal' which it might accept yet water down further.⁸⁵

In the end, the Europeans (save France's Colliard) were virtually united behind 2:1:1. Zoltowski, the Polish delegate,⁸⁶ felt it supported agricultural interests, especially in countries where their organisation was weak; Broz, of the Czech delegation,⁸⁷ felt it was better for low-skilled workers, an opinion based on the British voting memo.

⁸³ Ibid

⁸⁴ TNA FO/608/238/272 (9) 17.2.19

⁸⁵ Ibid

⁸⁶ Count M. Jean Zoltowski (N/A) Polish labour commission delegate; member of the Polish National Committee.

⁸⁷ Rudolph Broz (N/A) Czech (alternate) labour commission delegate; replaced Dr Benes.

Japan's Oka⁸⁸ favoured it saying two government votes was 'fair and balanced', and that his Government was actually more concerned with progressive labour legislation than the workers themselves.⁸⁹ The 'no' camp included Chile's de Bustamante⁹⁰ who envisioned the potential for a state/employer anti-worker bloc.⁹¹ Ultimately 1:1:1 was rejected by ten to four, with 2:1:1 passing by the same margin.⁹² Articles III and IV were thereby adopted for the tumultuous second reading.⁹³ A pervasive sense of frustration emanates from both the British and American sets of records, despite their differences in emphasis. The British perspective won the day, which determined that despite any philosophical arguments, the plenipotentiaries would not accept a minority State representation at the Labour Conference.

A labour 'Super Parliament': Article XVIII

Most of the Commission delegations were amenable toward finding consensus as the individual Articles were revised, but once the scheme's overall constitutionality came up for debate, obstruction came particularly from the American delegation despite their being in the minority. The Article XVIII debates reportedly 'gave rise to the most prolonged discussion and the most acute controversy' the Commission faced.⁹⁴ Its provisions were supremely contentious because they held national legislatures to account for enacting Conference decisions within a set timeframe. Angry disagreements greatly threatened the scheme's survival more than once. As drafted,

⁸⁸ Dr. Minoru Oka (1873-1939) Japanese labour delegation; Japan's former Director of Commercial and Industrial Affairs at the Ministry of Commerce.

⁸⁹ TNA FO/608/238/272 (9) 17.2.19

⁹⁰ Antonio Sánchez de Bustamante y Sirven (1865-1951) Cuban labour commission member, renowned Cuban lawyer, progressive politician, and law professor, et al; see appendices.

⁹¹ TNA FO/608/238/272 (9) 17.2.19

⁹² 1:1:1 = SG, Robinson, Colliard, Bustamante; 2:1:1 = GNB, MD, de Planches, Broz, Cabrini, Vandervelde, Mahaim, Otchiai and Oka, Zoltowski; Absent = Loucher.

⁹³ COL 114/JTG (9) 17.2.19

⁹⁴ *Origins*, vol. 1, p.146

Article XVIII determined that a Conference decision became an international Convention, and if it had passed by a two-thirds majority it would be automatically ratified by the national High Contracting Parties (HCPs) within a period of one year, unless their national legislature rejected it.

This proved intensely problematic. Japan, for one, argued most strongly that their economy was not developed enough to withstand such rapid standardisation.⁹⁵ Other Commission delegations, the Italians in particular, argued contrarily that the Article was not radical enough to make Conference decisions effective; subsequently they moved to bestow it with statutory powers. The majority of the Commission objected to the Italian proposal. Gompers and his American partner, the banker Henry Robinson⁹⁶ argued with increasing insistence that the American Constitution rendered the Article unconstitutional and unacceptable in any way. Robinson loathed 'European' socialism and governmental interference in labour matters as much as Gompers did, and he took up Gompers' battle with relish.

The compromise solution to satisfy such opposing views proved exceedingly difficult to arrange. The technical aspects and implications of the delegations' various proposals were well interpreted in Edward Phelan's chapter in volume one of Shotwell's *Origins*.⁹⁷ Phelan, as discussed, had been involved in the scheme's drafting in Britain before arriving in Paris. He recalled candidly the intransigence of an American delegation that 'never succeeded in convincing the Commission that a

⁹⁵ 'Each of the High Contracting Parties undertakes that it will within the period of one year from the end of the meeting of the Conference communicate its formal ratification of the Convention to the Director and will forthwith take all steps necessary to put the Convention into operation, unless such convention is disproved by its legislature.' See appendices. In March 1919 Article XVIII became Article XIX (discussed anon)

⁹⁶ Henry M Robinson (N/A) American labour delegation; the California banker and Shipping Board member that stepped in for Hurley after the first sitting.

⁹⁷ Phelan, 'Framing the International Labor Convention', *Origins*, vol. 1, pp.127-184

constitutional obstacle really existed' since the provision always clearly stated that national legislatures held the final power of veto.⁹⁸ Barnes exerted a great deal of tactical and diplomatic energy to keep the Labour Convention in progress at this stage, recalling the 'baffling problems' presented by several differing national constitutions. He remarked that the United States' Federal Government structure was particularly problematic since it held 'little power in regard to labour legislation', compared to Britain where its Parliament was 'supreme.' He also recalled that differing world climactic and industrial circumstances meant that their ultimate settlement would have to 'frame elastic conditions... yet be sufficiently rigid to achieve results.'⁹⁹

The Italian delegation, as discussed, had only given provisional support for 2:1:1 with the caveat when Article XVIII was discussed that their desire to give the Labour Conference mandatory authority would be considered.¹⁰⁰ On February 17, Italy's Mayor des Planches' presented a proposal for virtual statutory powers that still allowed for a final veto in the State legislature. The Italian proposal also suggested that a League Tribunal could refer nationally defeated Conventions back to the Labour Conference 'for fresh consideration.'¹⁰¹ A further, more binding proposal came two days later from Mayor des Planches which determined that a State could not appeal against any Convention that had passed the Conference a second time.¹⁰²

The Italian proposals proved unpopular. Belgium's Emile Vandervelde objected to the Italian memoranda together they essentially created a 'Super-Parliament', which he said might be nice as 'a system of the future' but it immediately negated the rights of

⁹⁸ Phelan memoir., p. 159

⁹⁹ Barnes, *FWWC*, p.249

¹⁰⁰ TNA FO 608/238/109 (5) 7.2.19

¹⁰¹ TNA FO 608/238/276 (9) 17.2.19

¹⁰² TNA FO 608/238/284 (10) 19.2.19

national governments. Barnes again argued that these notions were too controversial for the Peace Conference, and could potentially render all the Commission's work 'nugatory.' Furthermore, he explained, in 'backwards' countries, and in the case of a war-torn Belgium, rigid and incontestable legislation could be devastating. Naturally he drew support from Belgium, but also from America's Robinson, as well as Chile's Bustamante, Japan's Otchiai and Poland's Zoltowski. Japan's delegate clearly expressed his objection owing to their 'very different' economic and climactic conditions; hence preserving their parliament's power was paramount.¹⁰³ Robinson explained that America's Constitution 'prevented any delegation of power' as the Italians suggested, and Chile's Bustamante supported him, citing a similar constitutional conflict in his land.¹⁰⁴ A number of further objections saw the Italian proposal withdrawn on February 19 and the Article XVIII vote was held over.

The toxic Article XVIII debate was suddenly and frustratingly revived the very next day. France's Colliard moved for an amendment granting rigid conference powers, akin to what the Italians had proposed to create a 'deliberative international assembly' as soon as possible. Barnes retorted that while he was sympathetic to notions of a future labour 'super-parliament', it was neither Article XVIII's purpose, nor was it the Commission's job, to create one. This important expression of hope was officially recorded for posterity, as Barnes and Vandervelde both determined it was worthy of further consideration.¹⁰⁵ Robinson went on the attack, insisting the US Senate was 'quite loathe to part with any of its sovereignty', that it would never accept any labour super-parliament, and that the mere proposal would give the Senate a negative

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ COL 114/JTG (10) 19.2.19

¹⁰⁵ Ibid

impression of the Peace Conference's work.¹⁰⁶ Gompers also reacted angrily when France resurrected the Italian proposals, exclaiming that 'resolutions to the hopes of people are a waste of time here' since his own hopes were being ignored (probably referencing tepid receptions to the AFL's 1918 Charter). To calm the Americans, France's Fontaine suggested the first of several watered-down Article XVIII amendments, replacing the phrase 'endowed with powers', with 'under certain conditions to take resolutions having the force of international law.' Barnes explained that this would still result in the US Senate's rejection, and proposed the even weaker phrasing '... there may someday be such an agreement of the High Contracting Parties as to insure legislative effects to its agreements without unnecessary delay.'¹⁰⁷

Leon Jouhaux attacked the bulk of the Commission, asserting that such meek verbiage missed the point, and insisted that granting the immediate wish of French labour was the goal: allusions to future aspirations and expressions of hope were not enough. He again cited 'seething ferment' across labour, attributing the failure of the International Association for Labour Legislation (IALL) to similar 'nebulous' resolutions. Jouhaux also accused governments of 'always' being anti-labour, and stated that 'in spite of what Mr Barnes thinks the labour world does wish and will believe in a new world.' The American minutes of this sitting recorded Jouhaux's foreboding that the hypothetical Labour Conference had 'no right to reject these principles... and it may tomorrow be compelled by display of force' to satisfy labour's demands.¹⁰⁸

Such philosophical questions were rendered moot once the scheme's legality and constitutionality was questioned. Robinson asserted that the US legal expert, James

¹⁰⁶ COL 114/JTG (11) 20.2.19

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

Brown Scott,¹⁰⁹ had confirmed Article XVIII made the Labour Convention impossible to accept under a federal system of government. The President's assent to the Labour Convention, as a component of the Peace Treaty, was something the Senate would normally approve.¹¹⁰ The granting of legislative power through the elected House of Representatives was enshrined in the first paragraph of the US Constitution.¹¹¹ The Supreme Court, Robinson claimed, would therefore disregard the 'labour chapter' as unconstitutional and other federal nations (such as Chile) could follow suit.¹¹² Robinson's proposed an addendum to the Article, one which absolved the United States from any obligation toward Conference decisions: -

...and except where this undertaking is inconsistent with the constitution or organic law of any of the High Contracting Parties, and in such case it shall be obligatory on such High Contracting Party to use its utmost efforts to bring about such legislation as shall give full effect to any convention so approved.¹¹³

Gompers insisted the American delegation wanted to 'cooperate to obtain the best results', but that the Senate would simply refuse the Convention owing to Chapter XVIII, since the US Constitution was not about to be amended.¹¹⁴

Sir Malcolm argued that this was largely a matter of political will, since any constitutional democracy could already refuse the scheme as it stood since the national legislature ultimately held the final power of veto. He also gave the example of the British House of Commons which could 'postpone discussion of any subject

¹⁰⁹ James Brown Scott (1866-1943) Inquiry member at the Peace Conference; President of the American Institute of International Law.

¹¹⁰ TNA FO 608/238/290 (11) 20.2.19

¹¹¹ 'All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.' Source: NARA, online < http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution_transcript.html > accessed 9.4.16

¹¹² COL 114/JTG (11) 20.2.19

¹¹³ TNA FO 608/238/291 (11) 20.2.19

¹¹⁴ COL 114/JTG (11) 20.2.19

indefinitely.¹¹⁵ Robinson's proposal would institutionalise and enshrine a reduced obligation on all of the High Contracting Parties to the point of negating any power the Labour Conference held. Sir Malcolm advised the American delegation to confer again with their constitutional lawyers and governmental experts and adjourn the matter until further advice was in.¹¹⁶ Barnes moved that Article XVIII's wording would be the last thing finalised after the rest of the Labour Convention was completed, instructing the entire Commission to 'avail themselves of the interval to find a satisfactory formula' in concert with their national governments.¹¹⁷ The interval only served to deepen the Commission's dilemma during the third reading, as discussed below.

The British scheme and the Dominions: Article XXXIV

Barnes' transition from domestic politician to international figure was hastened when the British Dominions' leaders reacted angrily to the draft Labour Convention after the Scheme's second reading concluded. The draft Article XXXIV aimed to establish the rights of self-governing colonies and dominions in relation to the other High Contracting Parties (HCPs) to the Peace Treaty that would eventually join the League of Nations and ILO. However, as the League's composition was still undetermined when the scheme was penned, the language had been left intentionally vague.¹¹⁸ Several Dominion heads threatened to reject the entire scheme owing largely to how Article XXXIV 'limited' their rights. It read: -

The British Dominions and India shall have the same rights and obligations under this Convention as if they were separate High Contracting Parties.

The same shall apply to any colony or possession of any of the High Contracting Parties which on the application of such High Contracting Party

¹¹⁵ TNA FO 608/238/295 (12) 21.2.19

¹¹⁶ COL 114/ JTG(12) 21.2.19

¹¹⁷ TNA FO 608/238/296 (12) 21.2.19

¹¹⁸ Article XXXIV became Article XXXV during the scheme's third reading.

is recognised as fully self-governing by the Executive Council of the League of Nations.

The High Contracting Parties engage to apply conventions which they have ratified in accordance with the provisions of the present Convention to their colonies, protectorates and possessions, which are not fully self-governing:

1. Except when owing to the local conditions the convention is inapplicable, or
2. Subject to such modifications as may be necessary to adapt the convention to local conditions.

And each of the High Contracting Parties shall notify to the International Labour Office the action taken in respect of each of its colonies, protectorates and possessions which are not fully self-governing.¹¹⁹

Although the arguments were largely economic, they represented deeper matters of national identity in the new post-war world order. Furthermore, the particular difficulties for Barnes in simultaneously serving on the Labour Commission and the British Empire Delegation came to light in the records. The matters underpinning the Article XXXIV debates resonated throughout Barnes' complex post-Labour Commission work in Paris, indicating a critical juncture in his post-war career.

As the second reading concluded, the British and Belgian delegations attempted to refine Article XXXIV via amendments granting the dominions and India identical rights with all the HCPs to the Treaty, leaving the HCPs of controlling possessions, colonies and protectorates outside the ILO to determine their obligations to Conference decisions on a case-by-case basis.¹²⁰ America's Robinson also found fault with the verbiage and suggested special terms (similar to proportional representation) for self-governing possessions and federated nations so that 'the difficulties of the United States in accepting the convention'¹²¹ could be averted.. His proposals essentially aimed to

¹¹⁹ TNA FO 608/238/367, *Report of the Commission on International Labour Legislation* (p. 29), 24.3.19

¹²⁰ TNA FO 608/238/317 (14) 26.2.19

¹²¹ COL 114/ JTG(14) 26.2.19

devolve the power of labour legislation to each of the 48 American States, equating conditions in the USA to those in some British Colonies. Barnes and Vandervelde objected, arguing this would defeat the entire ILO project: It would make the Labour Conference unwieldy, create ‘overwhelming’ majorities, fracture the unity of powerful economic nations, and ultimately make enacting ratified Conventions in large entities like the United States, Canada, and Australia very difficult.¹²²

Article XXXIV’s second reading debates also unfortunately re-opened discussion of Articles XVIII and IV. Article XVIII (as discussed) was on hold owing to the ‘American problems’, while Article IV (conference representation constitution) had already been decided via majority voting as discussed. Robinson persisted but his motion was eventually defeated, nine to three, with France’s Colliard abstaining.¹²³ Japan’s Otchiai and Chile’s Bustamante were not present. Given their earlier arguments, they probably would have supported Robinson but his motion still would have been lost. However Barnes’ Article XXXIV woes were not over by March 1919 when the Labour Commission officially disbanded and Barnes became its acting Secretary.

When drafted in January, the original opening clause to Article XXXIV’s read: ‘the self-governing Dominions of the British Empire and India may become parties to this Convention, and have the same rights and obligations thereunder *as if they were* independent States’. Barnes said this was done to ‘safeguard’ their uncertain position in relation to the other HCPs to the Treaty.¹²⁴ Canada’s President Robert Borden made a strong declaration of Dominion independence before the Peace Conference on March 12 1919 and the lingering repercussions for Barnes are discussed in the concluding chapter.

¹²² TNA FO 608/238/317 (14) 26.2.19; COL 114/ JTG(14) 26.2.19

¹²³ TNA FO 608/238/326 (15) 27.2.19

¹²⁴ TNA FO 608/238/436-7, 9.4.9

It was subsequently determined that Article XXXV (as it became during the third reading) would be amended prior to reaching the Peace Treaty's Drafting Committee to ensure that the British Dominions and India were accorded the same rights as all signatories to the Peace Treaty and the future League Covenant. The third clause determining obligation to observe a conference convention based on a colony's self-governing status, local conditions or the ruling HCP's determination (when not self-governing) was preserved.¹²⁵ Somewhat ironically, the Americans had condemned this settlement for giving unfair preference to the Empire which perpetuated an imperialistic regime of sub-standard conditions in its colonies.

The day before the Labour Commission broke for recess on February 28, Barnes made some last-ditch yet fruitless attempts to move past the Article XVIII impasse with the American delegation. First, he suggested replacing the line 'unless such Convention is disapproved by its Legislature' with 'unless such Convention *fails to obtain the support of the national authorities concerned*'¹²⁶ - leaving each nation to determine for itself which branch of their legislature would deal with ratified conventions within the set time limit. Robinson was adamant that this was pointless and he disregarded Barnes' suggestion, saying it did not smooth 'the American snag' at all.¹²⁷ Barnes' next attempt at concession was the addition of a new paragraph that would allow the federated United States to remain a unitary force while still respecting the legislative sovereignty of its components, using language consistent with the adopted Article IV. It read: -

In the case of a Federal State, if the power of legislation on any matter dealt with in any Convention rests with the Legislatures of the Constituent States, the High Contracting Parties shall communicate the Convention to the Constituent

¹²⁵ Article XXXV of the Labour Convention was amended and became Article 421 of the Labour Chapter (XIII) in the Peace Treaty, see appendices

¹²⁶ COL 114/ JTG(16) 27.2.19; second of two sittings that day.

¹²⁷ Ibid

States and each State may adhere separately to the Convention. Notification of the adhesion of any such State through the Federal Government to the Director shall be deemed to be the ratification of the Convention in respect of that State.

¹²⁸

The Americans were not at all satisfied. Gompers gave the floor to Robinson, who had earlier accused Barnes of trying to limit his speaking, having also just discovered that the Commission delegations' secretaries were abridging the minutes. Robinson demanded he be recorded verbatim, particularly when he argued points that he claimed prevented things 'operating as Great Britain expects.'¹²⁹ The verbose addendum he proposed released any country from their obligations, and from any sanctions, if they could argue that their internal composition prevented compliance.¹³⁰ Robinson asserted the discussion was over, threatening that the US' lawyers were prepared to file briefs to the League of Nations commission, or the Peace Conference Secretariat, if the Labour Convention contradicted their written Constitution.¹³¹ Gompers interjected, grandly proclaiming that the US Constitution was a binding legal document as well as 'a true declaration of the rights of man. Its object was to guarantee the life, liberty and property of every citizen.'¹³² The American people would directly challenge Article XVIII if forced upon them as it stood, he concluded.

France's Leon Jouhaux was reportedly 'astonished' that the AFL leader did not realise his attitude 'would ruin every effort which might be made to level up working

¹²⁸ TNA FO 608/238/333 (16) 27.2.19

¹²⁹ COL 114/ JTG(16/17) 27, 28.2.19

¹³⁰ TNA FO 608/238/343 (17) 28.2.19; p. 211 of *Origins* vol II: 'In derogation of the foregoing, and because of the fact that certain of the High Contracting Parties, by reason of their internal organisation, may be unable to make a valid binding agreement in accordance with the terms of this Convention, it is understood, in that event, it shall be obligatory on such High Contracting Powers to use their best endeavour to obtain a substantial compliance with the provisions of this article. However, if for any reason, such Power shall fail for the period of ----- months (after the submission of any Convention adopted hereunder) to bring about legislatively or otherwise w substantial compliance with such Convention, then, and in that event, the other High Contracting Parties who may be bound under this provision, shall, if they so elect, be released from the operation of this provision of the said Convention.'

¹³¹ COL 114/ JTG(17) 28.2.19

¹³² TNA FO 608/238/342 (17) 28.2.19

conditions.’ The Belgian jurist Ernest Mahaim also challenged Robinson’s legal advice, adding that any hopes he had held about the United States’ desire for progressive labour legislation were dashed. He further expressed his resentment that America sought to escape binding international agreements while his own war-ravaged country would risk their own recovery in the name of labour’s advance.¹³³

The Commission’s stark option was to vote for the British text and leave the United States’ participation in the ILO in doubt - or accept Robinson’s amendment which radically reduced America’s obligations.¹³⁴ Despite such considerable drama, the second reading closed with Robinson’s amendment defeated with a number of abstentions and the only ‘ayes’ being the Americans. Barnes’ amendment granting responsibility for Conference decisions to national authorities passed, preserving Article XVIII for the time being.¹³⁵ The Italian-French joint resolution hoping for ‘the force of international law’ to stand behind international labour legislation also passed; the Americans and Japanese voted against, as did Sir Malcolm, with Barnes abstaining.¹³⁶ Technically the outcome was paradoxical, as any ILO participant’s obligation relied upon such vicissitudes of public pressure for social progress as the Peace Treaty might enshrine, juxtaposed with a potential lack of political will and/or realist economic arguments that could be made against Conference decisions.

Barnes moved finally that the first Labour Conference would occur in October 1919, allowing time for participation by ‘the neutrals.’¹³⁷ The Commission adjourned to allow delegates to confer with ‘their Governments and organisations of employers

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ COL 114/ JTG(18) 28.2.19

¹³⁶ TNA FO 608/239/349 (18) 28.2.19; the proposals alluding to the ‘labour super-parliament’ are discussed in the section introducing Article XVIII, above.

¹³⁷ COL 114/ JTG(18) 28.2.19

and workpeople' regarding the Labour Convention's second reading adoptions.¹³⁸ It was envisioned that the mid-March third reading would entail only minor final amendments and that the Labour Commission Report would reach the entire Peace Conference shortly before the next plenary. Barnes immediately showed Lloyd George the adopted Convention, then travelled home with Harold Butler to meet British Labour representatives. Samuel Gompers, 'instead of consulting the American experts, had used the interval for an extended tour of Italy, where he was royally received.'¹³⁹

Conclusions

Disagreements over the power of the Labour Conference stemmed from political differences shaped by historical experience, despite being rooted in similar soil. Gompers' intransigence as President at times had the potential to wreck the entire scheme as he passionately opposed the idea of any governmental interference in labour matters. This was intensely problematic since the ILO's founding premise was that minimum standards for labour were arrived at through national legislation via international agreements. The mere suggestion of an international 'parliament for labour' contravened the AFL's core tenet of non-political labour, while Barnes contended that a beneficial labour-State relationship was proven: he held that it was already the direction things were moving in the West, and industrialising Eastern nations held the same aspirations. The British scheme was a positive break from the past, Barnes argued, because it recognised the value of labour working with and in government. The tensions between the European strain of state-centric, collectivist socialism, and American voluntarism and independence were apparent throughout this analysis, personified by the various arguments of the Commission delegations.

¹³⁸ TNA FO 608/239/350 (18) 28.2.19

¹³⁹ Shotwell diary, p.194

The philosophical tensions exacerbated during the Labour Commission sittings also capture how nationalism and internationalism in 1919 were to some extent still ‘inextricably entangled’ concepts,¹⁴⁰ but the very existence and make-up of the Commission showed, perhaps better than any other Peace Conference commission, a desire for institutions and political settlements to catch up with the zeitgeist for world peace through the satisfaction of labour’s demands. Some might see as evidence of great societal evolution, though these aspirations were tempered by the constraints of the Peace Conference environment (as Barnes repeatedly reminded delegates). The Commission minutes set out in detail how far nation s were willing to go after the war to sacrifice their national sovereignty in relation to the power of the annual International Labour Conference, making for immensely powerful reading.

International relations and the state-labour relationship become more inter-dependent than ever as the post-war world took shape in Paris. The minutes of the first and second readings of the draft Labour Convention captured how Barnes adapted his inherent logic and natural ability as mediator and conciliator to navigate it through several near-crises. At the same time, a picture of a 19th century British trade unionist morphing into a 20th century world diplomat emerges. During this period, the challenges Barnes faced also provided increasing opportunities for him to expand his horizons beyond the realm of the British labour movement he so loved yet had perennial struggles with from the time that his politicisation began.

¹⁴⁰ Sluga, *Internationalism*, p.44

4 The Third Reading of the Labour Convention

The March Intermission

A flurry of key behind-the scenes activity between February 28 and March 11 1919 unofficially marked the beginning of the British scheme's third reading somewhat ahead of schedule. James Shotwell remained in Paris and worked with Edward Phelan, investigating the doubtful constitutional scenarios that Samuel Gompers and Henry Robinson had portrayed. Although a member of the American delegation to the Peace Conference, Shotwell became an indispensable asset to the entire Commission as the recess commenced, and he remained so for the duration. Phelan, the only British delegate to remain in Paris, was motivated by the supposed impossibility of Article XVIII to seek advice from the American law experts there autonomously. It was evident that all of the American Peace Conference delegations held misunderstandings about the draft Labour Convention that posed a threat to the Labour Commission's credibility, and it was feared that Gompers' negative comments might have given the American President Woodrow Wilson serious misgivings about their work. Shotwell recalled of the time: -

...In the weeks and months that followed, Mr. Phelan and I were destined to work together intimately and at high pressure in the negotiations which led to the creation of the International Labor Organization, and I found him a loyal colleague, fertile and creative of suggestion, one who was never lacking in the understanding of the difficulties confronting the American Delegation, perhaps aided in this by his Irish sense of humour. The International Labor Organization owes more to him than will probably ever be widely known, for both as planner and negotiator he worked impersonally in order to work effectively...¹

The British delegation was indeed fortunate to have such a dedicated, energetic pair of intellectuals working away in Paris. No official records or minutes exist for this

¹ Shotwell diary, pp.109-10

crucial yet secretive early phase of the ILO's inception, so the testimony of participants is relied upon to reveal a number of interesting, key developments that have not been widely discussed. Shotwell endeavoured to find a way forward despite his own initial doubts about certain aspects of the draft Convention, writing 'Indeed, I had criticized the British scheme from the start for the extent to which it tried to circumvent government action by proposing to create law in an international body in which the governments formed only a fraction of the membership.'²

Shotwell was very busy with 'the Inquiry', the American groups of academics tasked primarily with working on territorial and economic questions, and was unaware of the specific problems the British labour delegation faced throughout the second reading. He had heard rumours that the Commission was invoking 'an international parliament of labour with power to make international laws in the form of treaties.'³ Barnes briefed him on developments during a five-minute hallway meeting on the day the Commission broke up, informing him that they were 'up against the American Constitution.'⁴ Shotwell was surprised that the British Government was supporting proposals so out of keeping with his understanding of the British way. The long list of punishments for States which failed to comply with their League obligations, for example, gave him sympathy for Gompers' belief that legislation was beyond the remit of organised labour.⁵ Shotwell's diary recorded that Woodrow Wilson's adviser, David Hunter Miller⁶, had called the draft Convention 'a

² Ibid, p.169

³ Shotwell diary, p.200

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Articles 411 through 420 of Chapter XIII deal with defaulting nations and the complaint and sanctions process; see appendices.

⁶ David Hunter Miller (1875-1961), legal adviser to US Delegations, worked closely with Col. House and Sec. of State Lansing; helped draft final Peace Treaty.

joke' and disregarded it entirely.⁷ Nevertheless, Shotwell saw the necessity of getting a formal labour convention in place soon, for 'European labour was in a very restive and critical state of mind, with Bolshevism threatening in the East and revolution flaming up in Central Europe... A downright failure of the Labour Commission was therefore no trivial matter.'⁸

Phelan's concern over the Article XVIII stand-off drew him to Shotwell on March 4 as he reviewed the most recent Labour Commission minutes. He had also 'discovered with consternation' that while Gompers was touring Italy, Robinson had also left Paris. Phelan became adamant that Wilson should know of 'the pretended constitutional difficulty' being perpetuated, sensing there was little hope the impasse could be overcome unless urgent action was taken.⁹ He found that Shotwell was similarly preoccupied and complaining that, since his introduction to the scheme in January, the Inquiry's only knowledge about the Commission's work was through occasional, random contact with the British.¹⁰ At Phelan's insistence, Shotwell agreed to discuss the situation with Royal Meeker¹¹ of the American Department of Labour. Phelan also learned of the arrival in Paris of Professor Felix Frankfurter, the Harvard constitutional law expert and advisor to Wilson on labour matters, and sought him out.¹²

Frankfurter was ill with *la grippe*¹³, yet took great interest in the case,

⁷ Shotwell diary, p.200

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Phelan memoir, p.159

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Royal Meeker, (1873-1953), US Dept. of Labour/Commissioner for Labour Statistics, editor-in-chief of *Monthly Labour Review*.

¹² Felix Frankfurter (1882–1965), Professor of Law at Harvard; Special Assistant to the US Secretary of War tasked with strike resolution, also member of the Zionist delegation to the Peace Conference.

¹³ Known as "Spanish Flu" or "La Grippe", the influenza pandemic of 1918-19 killed more people than the war, cited as the most devastating epidemic in recorded history (source: Human Virology, Stanford University - <https://virus.stanford.edu/uda/>; accessed 7.6.16); Sir Malcolm Delevingne was

immediately judging that the Americans' arguments were specious. After reviewing Robinson's supposedly 'expert' advice with two more lawyers, his opinion was firmly entrenched. Phelan asked Frankfurter to go to the US President, stressing 'what a tragedy it would be if the project of establishing an international organisation that could be of inestimable benefit to mankind were to come to naught' owing to the Americans' 'misunderstanding.'¹⁴ Shotwell also recorded Frankfurter's alarm at the situation, noting his remark that 'it would be nothing short of an international scandal if, after having promised labour legislation with such a magnificent gesture at the first meeting of the Peace Conference, there should be a complete breakdown on a technical question.'¹⁵ Frankfurter insisted that Shotwell solve this problem by any means necessary, through co-operation with the British 'or any others who could help prevent so disastrous a fiasco.'¹⁶

As the alarm call shot up the chain, Shotwell managed a March 9 interview with Colonel House,¹⁷ 'probably the most hard-pressed man in Paris'.¹⁸ Brevity was essential, so Phelan and Shotwell prepared by carefully underlining the specific phrase in question.¹⁹ House did not want to be bothered with Labour Commission matters at all, since Gompers had already fully briefed him, and his reception was 'the reverse of cordial.'²⁰ He felt that an international body designed to impose labour legislation on his country was 'utterly preposterous... (inferring that) it could

also a Paris victim.

¹⁴ Phelan memoir, p.160

¹⁵ Shotwell diary, p.199

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Edward M. House (1858-1938) American peace delegation; powerful diplomat, politician, and advisor to President Woodrow Wilson on European affairs; was not an actual Colonel. see appendices, and Charles Seymour (ed.), *The Intimate Papers of Colonel House. In 4 volumes.* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1928)

¹⁸ Phelan memoir, p.160

¹⁹ COL 104, Shotwell/Reigelman interview w/Phelan c. 1930

²⁰ Phelan memoir, p.161

not be entertained for a moment.²¹ Shotwell argued rather bravely that the United States ought to express a strong point of view and not merely criticise European plans.²² After re-reading the text, House allegedly remarked ‘This is not at all what I understood from Gompers. I don’t say we could necessarily accept it as it stands, but it is something we would not be justified in refusing to discuss.’²³ Shotwell’s diary alleges he personally convinced House that the American peace delegation might be blamed for the ILO’s failure, wholly undermining Wilson’s ‘championship of democracy.’²⁴

For his good deed, Shotwell was informally appointed by Colonel House as the Labour Commission’s technical advisor, a position which ‘remained irregular and at times embarrassing.’²⁵ Despite his unease, Shotwell held great respect for the thoroughness of the British and he found Barnes to be ‘a straight forward, intelligent man...a substantial, wholesome type, whose strength is rather moral than intellectual.’ At the age of sixty, Shotwell noted with respect that Barnes had ‘none of the fire of (Keir) Hardie, but he has been fighting labour battles for almost half a century.’²⁶ Shotwell endeavoured to make the British scheme sound more like a labour parliament, and less like the super-state ‘making labour laws for all the world’ as American perceptions went. Barnes returned to Paris with the British labour delegates on March 10, and with Shotwell, Frankfurter, and James Brown Scott they worked on the Convention all day before reaching an amendment ‘which seemed to satisfy’²⁷

²¹ Ibid

²² Shotwell diary, p.204

²³ Phelan memoir, p.161

²⁴ Shotwell diary, p.204

²⁵ Ibid, pp.204-5

²⁶ Shotwell diary, p.143

²⁷ Shotwell diary, p.206

While in London, Barnes conferred with British Government and TUC representatives including Margaret Bondfield on the scheme's second reading outcomes. The Parliamentary Committee of the TUC assured Barnes of their sustained support for 2:1:1. He had also been granted near free rein by the Cabinet to use his own judgement regarding any subsequent amendments, but with the explicit instruction that under no circumstances should Governmental delegates wind up casting less than fifty per-cent of the Conference vote.²⁸

Edward Phelan's midnight mission

With the American issue momentarily on hold, the priority for the British delegation was maintaining European support for Article III and its 2:1:1 conference vote constitution lest the entire scheme fail. Phelan was struck by Barnes' and Sir Malcolm's confidence that 2:1:1 would easily survive the third reading. In his memoir he recalled a colourful argument wherein he reminded them of 2:1:1's narrow margin of passage, informing them how the European proletariat had reportedly found the 1:1:1 formula highly appealing during the break. In reply, Sir Malcolm invited him to borrow Barnes' car and drive around Paris on the 'fool's errand' of waking up the Polish and Czechoslovakian representatives in the middle of the night to ensure their votes.²⁹ Phelan claimed that he secured the Polish vote upon waking their oft-absent delegate Zoltowski, getting a written guarantee which the Polish substitute Patek³⁰ could use in his place.

²⁸ Phelan memoir, p.162

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Stanislaw Patek (1866-1944), Polish labour delegate (alternate); lawyer and diplomat, served as Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1919 to 1920; Member of the Polish National Committee on Labour questions

Phelan's subsequent rousing of the Czech delegate Dr. Benes was less encouraging. There he discovered that the Czech workers and the Czech Labour Ministry both favoured 1:1:1 and that Benes felt obliged to vote accordingly. Phelan's vibrant memoir depicted how he strong-armed Benes to decide otherwise, warning him that the British Government might not 'feel cordial to the smaller powers' if the Labour Convention failed as a result, and that Czech support at such 'a critical moment' would surely be rewarded.³¹ 'Had either the Poles or the Czechs voted the other way the British text would have been defeated. Each of (these particular) countries was often to claim in the future that without its vote there would never have been an ILO', he concluded.³²

The Labour Commission members agreed unanimously that their goal was to achieve consensus rapidly and finalise the Labour Convention quickly. During their first reunion sitting, Barnes happily reported how the London TUC Parliamentary group was largely behind the second reading draft, presenting the two amendments that the TUC Council's Bondfield had proposed on behalf of the National Federation of Women Workers (NFWW). These important proposals passed the Commission easily and ultimately determined that Conference questions relative to women's needs required a female national adviser,³³ and also specified that the ILO Director's office employed a number of female staff.^{34,35} The British minutes recorded that the

³¹ Phelan memoir, p.163

³² Ibid, p.166

³³ TNA FO 608/238/449 (20) 12.3.19; became Addendum to Article IV.

³⁴ TNA FO 608/238/440 (19) 11.3.19; became part of Article IX.

³⁵ ILO Shotwell papers refer several missing 'Barnes file (48)' docs: 2.10 D12, 2.09B01 and 2.09B02 respectively: 'Recess: Barnes corres. with women, 8-11 March 1919'; 'Letter from Miss B concerning Agenda'; 'Ack from GNB in mention of amendments'; TUC Archive at London Met held no records at time of writing.

bulk of the minor concerns raised at that point by the European and Japanese delegations could be easily resolved over the coming days.³⁶

Barnes' initial optimism was quickly dampened, however, as a frank and hastily-penned note to Lloyd George two days later disclosed: -

I enclose a summary of our Labour scheme. I had fondly hoped it had been agreed to and had reported so last week. Instead of which the Americans and French have come back to assail it from opposite sides. The first want to make the Conference into a mere talking shop, the French to make it a super parliament. I should like to feel that we have your support for our scheme as it stands.³⁷

The Henry Cabot Lodge campaign

Recent political developments In the United States did not bode well for the Labour Convention's fate. Owing to the success of the Henry Cabot Lodge³⁸ campaign against the League of Nations, Gompers reported on March 11 that for the first time in his life he was compelled to put his government's view ahead of the American worker's.³⁹ Lodge, the Republican Senate leader, had swayed thirty-seven Senators to reject the Peace Treaty if it contained a League Covenant committing Congress to aid European nations without its expressed authority.⁴⁰ Gompers described how the Labour Convention, as an adjunct of the League of Nations, could risk 'compromising the whole work of the Peace Conference' in presenting such a challenge to the American Constitution. It was just too risky despite 'remarkable' national support recent by-elections had shown for Wilson's liberal diplomatic

³⁶ TNA FO 608/238/440 (19) 11.3.19

³⁷ TPA LG/F/4/3/4, Barnes to DLG, 13.3.19

³⁸ Henry Cabot Lodge (1850-1924) Republican leader of the 66 US Senate; hated Wilson's liberal policies and was considered his political nemesis and ultimately responsible for the failure of the United States' passage of the League of Nations convention. He rejected the notion that the US should come to the aid of foreign nations without a Congressional vote, among others.

³⁹ TNA FO 608/238/444 (19) 11.3.19

⁴⁰ Ibid

policy. Gompers concluded that it was unlikely that the Labour Convention would pass the Senate, therefore they were better off focusing on getting the ‘fundamental principles’ of the AFL labour declaration (passim, previous chapter) into the Peace Treaty somehow. On that note he announced that the Preliminary Peace Conference had formally requested all Commissions to submit their final Reports, conventions and recommendations soon.⁴¹

The American plan for Article XIX

James Shotwell called the March 12 sitting ‘a trying one’⁴² as the American delegate Robinson embarked upon an audacious and redundant trajectory upon mention of Article III’s, insisting his speech be recorded fully.⁴³ He proposed a five-day suspension of discussion on Articles III, IV and XVIII (now XIX) to allow the Americans to draft their amendment to make the scheme constitutionally viable.⁴⁴ Robinson forcefully reiterated his previous arguments, adding that dissatisfaction from America’s workers plus advice from his constitutional law experts necessitated significant amendments to the British plan if not ‘a substitute’ scheme that every country could accept. It seemed that the American delegation had not spent any of the recess working out the difficulties the second reading presented to them, and they were now demanding a one-size fits all solution for the world’s labour problems.

Barnes’ extraordinary reply was also captured verbatim. Shotwell credited Barnes for his restraint while underscoring ‘the fundamental position of the whole

⁴¹ Ibid

⁴² Shotwell diary, p.208

⁴³ Ibid, p.209

⁴⁴ TNA FO 608/238/449-450 (20) 12.3.19; Article XVIII became XIX after some Drafting Committee revisions.

matter: whether (the) convention is to have any binding force'⁴⁵ at all. Addressing Gompers, Barnes explained that his American colleague had put the Peace Conference and the Labour Commission in a very unfortunate, if not impossible, position.⁴⁶ Despite a month of debate and many revisions, Robinson was still misinterpreting the Convention as an assault on national sovereignty, he said. He also reminded him that they had presented a similar amendment two weeks earlier, which was voted down.⁴⁷ As a compromise, the Commission agreed that national 'competent authorities' would ultimately rule on Conference decisions: nevertheless Robinson proposed further language to lessen any state's responsibility, repeating specious constitutional arguments. Despite the concessions already made, Barnes declared, Robinson was putting forward not an amendment, but 'a proposition which alters the whole character and structure of the scheme...'⁴⁸

Our people will not only be impatient but will say that we are not competent to do the business... We do not need a Debating Society and therefore we are up against a fundamental difference of opinion. We want an organisation of Labour with certain machinery by which Conventions will be given effect... we want an organisation with a prospect of some practical results following immediately thereon and it is for us to say what we now intend. If we intend to get on with our scheme, let us get on with it...⁴⁹

Such a transformation would require re-submission of the draft scheme to all national authorities, bringing them back to square one to indefinitely delay their Report to the Peace Conference.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Shotwell diary p, 209 / ILO 'Shotwell papers', working papers 1930-31

⁴⁶ TNA FO 608/238/449-52 (20) 12.3.19

⁴⁷ Ibid /450

⁴⁸ Ibid /449-52

⁴⁹ TNA FO 608/238/451-2 (20), 3.12.19

⁵⁰ COL 114/ JTG(20) 12.3.19

European delegation members expressed further outcry, amounting to how the Americans were wasting valuable time and seeking to dilute the Conference's powers over their own national legislative issue. Leon Jouhaux defended the Labour Convention as the League of Nations' best chance for support and the best thing the Peace Conference could hope to produce. France, he said, whole-heartedly embraced its spirit, and he 'deplored the prospect that the United States, whose president had been the most active advocate and builder of the idea, might be the one stumbling block in the way of realization', again warning that restive labour might 'rise to wipe out governments and itself reconstruct the world' if the League was sunk in this way.⁵¹ Belgium's Vandervelde 'deplored the fact that at the eleventh hour' the United States sought to cobble together a brand new proposal.⁵² Arthur Fontaine was also angry, yet emphasised how vitally necessary the United States' participation was. Robinson was thereby granted a week to concoct his text, postponing the final vote for the third reading to March 17.⁵³

Shotwell and the 'dual method'

The American proposals dominated the remainder of the Labour Convention drafting sessions; until then the Commission's work had been preoccupied with amendments to the British draft. Ultimately the scheme's Conference procedure was fundamentally transformed, and its potential scope for enacting progressive labour reform was weakened owing to the vital need for the United States' acquiescence. Getting around the 'American snag' involved the help of the American historian Shotwell, albeit somewhat against his will. Sensing the inevitable, he recalled his attempt to remain obscure in the corner of the room before Gompers introduced him

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ TNA FO 608/238/435 (20) 12.3.19

to the Commission as Robinson's substitute Commission member. 'This was against my wish, as I did not want to be involved in votes for which I had no responsibility, but there was no way out', he wrote.⁵⁴ He became a Labour Commission official on March 13.

Immediately Shotwell had to mitigate competing American and French tensions with Barnes struggling to maintain the Commission's momentum. Fontaine provocatively revived Article III on the morning of March 13, claiming the French Advisory Committee of Employers and Workpeople had shown renewed preference for 1:1:1 during the break. Barnes reminded him that 2:1:1 had been adopted and would stand until the American proposal was in.⁵⁵ That afternoon Barnes was decisive, telling Robinson that his untimely deferral was only granted with the full understanding that Article XIX would be decided on March 17 'without further postponement.'⁵⁶ By Shotwell's testimony, March 17 was possibly the busiest day of his life.⁵⁷ By nine o'clock that morning he had already seen James Brown Scott to discuss legal implications and within the hour he and Robinson were reviewing their options.

At that point the far less-binding Conference 'recommendation' was introduced. Shotwell explained how Article XIX's revision determined that all Conference proposals now automatically became *recommendations*, in contrast to Conventions, which had passed the Conference with a two-thirds majority and came with potential sanctions attached. Each participating country was then merely responsible for presenting the recommendation to its competent authority for

⁵⁴ Shotwell diary, p.210

⁵⁵ TNA FO/608/238/456 (21) 13.3.19.

⁵⁶ Ibid

⁵⁷ Shotwell diary, p.214

consideration, which could then be denied without any penalty. Shotwell realised the conundrum this presented, recalling that ‘the problem was to make the recommendation more than the “pious wish” which Mr. Barnes and M. Fontaine regarded as utterly ineffective.’⁵⁸ It is important to recall that the bulk of the Europeans had sought a Labour Conference with quasi-statutory powers for affecting national legislation.

The ‘dual method’ was made flesh through a new American article proposal, Article XX, which essentially eradicated the ‘ingenious innovation’ at the heart of the British scheme.⁵⁹ Article XX lessened the obligation to implement Conference outcomes further by asserting that any ILO member could claim its constitutional or legislative structure left it with ‘limited means’ for introducing a Convention, removing the threat of any penalty. The dual method meant that the Americans, or any federated nation, could arbitrarily exempt themselves from any Conference decision it chose.⁶⁰ As Phelan described it, the idea of the recommendation in itself was benign, but going the extra step to make Conference decisions so vulnerable left labour decisions to ‘ordinary diplomatic procedure’,⁶¹ in other words: business as usual.

Finally, the Americans proposed an addition which eliminated a key feature of the British scheme which threatened to scupper it completely. Their Article XXI proposal granted the League of Nations primary responsibility for appeals and sanctions concerning Conference decisions, bestowing them with power over labour decisions. The British scheme had proposed that labour experts of each state, and the

⁵⁸ Ibid

⁵⁹ Phelan memoir, p.159

⁶⁰ TNA FO 608/238/493(25) 17.3.19

⁶¹ Phelan memoir, p.159

Governing Body of the ILO, had this responsibility, leaving the LON Tribunal as the court of last resort only. It is difficult to comprehend why Robinson would suggest this when the League of Nations was already under siege in America, lest he wanted the Scheme to fail altogether (a point revisited in the following chapter).

Nevertheless, he argued that using the existing LON machinery to impose sanctions under its Covenant would reduce ‘friction between various States’ and fit better with ‘the American national sentiment, which is specifically in favour of strengthening the power of the League of Nations and its existing organs.’⁶² This cannily implied a buttressing of Wilson’s vision, offsetting the Lodge campaign to improve the ILO scheme’s chances through popular support.

Barnes saw through Robinson’s assertions, rejecting Article XXI as anathema to a scheme founded upon the relationship between a semi-independent ILO and a merely reinforcing League, a principle established during the earliest discussions with the British trade unions.⁶³ Barnes was stunned by this suggestion of ‘something entirely newit will be necessary to begin again, after five or six weeks of discussion, to deliberate on the principles adopted from the beginning. I admit that I am overwhelmed at the thought.’⁶⁴

Flawed as it was, discussion over the dual method and its underpinning ethos highlighted some interesting insights and the nature of the zeitgeist for a true ‘International Labour Conference’ for labour right after the war, revealing further where these ideas sprang from, and where they might be headed. In its defense, Professor Shotwell contended that the recommendation could in fact make the

⁶² *Origins*, vol I, p.262

⁶³ TNA FO 608/238/493(25) 17.3.19

⁶⁴ *Origins*, vol I, p.265

Conference stronger and potentially more productive. It promoted labour reforms that did not require the majority vote to pass, thereby giving the national competent authorities a greater body of legislation to consider.⁶⁵ He gave his personal assurance that its acceptance would ‘secure the unreserved support of the US in the whole work of the new organisation’,⁶⁶ reflecting the voluntarist attitude historically underpinning American organised labour ideology. France’s Fontaine in turn gave the US delegation a brief lecture on the contrasting history of European labour legislation, pointing out that no Americans had attended any world labour conferences until 1917. Maybe in America, Fontaine contended, mere labour opinion could force change, but European parliaments had historically refused to legislate until economic competition forced them to.⁶⁷ Gompers nevertheless characterised the Europeans’ attitude as ‘impudent’, giving assurance that if America were granted the liberty they sought they would comply. He also warned that if the United States was forced to remain outside the ILO ‘the separation might become accentuated with time’,⁶⁸ inferring American isolationism as well as a threat to the post-war Anglo-American relationship. The Italian representatives questioned his logic, however, as Gompers had earlier pointed out the US Senate’s hostility toward the League of Nations, yet here were proposals to make the ILO virtually dependent upon it for enforcement: this put the ILO and the LON Covenant equally at risk of rejection.⁶⁹

Barnes initiated a sub-committee to find a workable compromise in a virtual last-ditch effort after so much late-breaking conjecture.⁷⁰ Personally, he was willing

⁶⁵ ‘Report of the sub-committee on Article 19 of the Labour Convention’ (Henceforth ‘S-C Report’), *Origins* vol.II, p.266 (doc 46)

⁶⁶ Phelan memoir, p.159

⁶⁷ TNA FO 608/238/494 (25) 17.3.19

⁶⁸ *Ibid* /495

⁶⁹ *Ibid*.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*.

to accept the recommendation as long as the Convention protocols remained intact. The Article XIX sub-committee met for two days, comprising the Belgian delegate Mahaim, America's Robinson and Britain's Sir Malcolm, with Shotwell as technical advisor. The ILO project had initially excited Shotwell, but the committee's second day nearly broke him. Writing on March 17, he had said 'What I wanted to do most of all at the Peace Conference has now come true - to negotiate that part of the general treaty which has to do with improving the conditions of the working people of the world.'⁷¹ However when the jurist Mahaim was absent the next day, Shotwell refereed a hot debate between Robinson and Sir Malcolm that nearly drove him to quit, recording that the session was 'extremely lively, with frank exchanges of opinion on more than the subject matter.'⁷² Robinson eventually backed down. Shotwell recorded in his diary that he had picked up his coat, ready to storm out until 'the obstructing member gave way.'⁷³ Presumably Robinson gave way on Article XXI, the plan to make the League of Nations responsible for challenged Conference decisions, as Sir Malcolm's Subcommittee Report did not recommend its adoption.⁷⁴

The Subcommittee Report put into words what everyone already knew: in the end, it was vitally more important to include the United States in a 'weakened' scheme than to have a more powerful one without it. Article XIX's system of recommendations was adopted which, as Shotwell contended, could allow different states to apply reforms in ways that best suited their local and national industrial

⁷¹ Shotwell diary, p.215

⁷² Ibid, p.217

⁷³ Shotwell diary, p.216; it is assumed Robinson gave way on Article XXI, the plan to make the League of Nations responsible for challenged Conference decisions, as the sub-committee report did not recommend its adoption.

⁷⁴ 'Report of the Subcommittee on Article 19 of the Labor Convention, March 19, 1919' in *Origins* vol II (doc. 46), pp.361-4

conditions.⁷⁵ Article XX was also accepted, but amended to allow only truly Federated States ‘in respect of their treaty-making powers’ to treat conventions voluntarily, narrowing the field for exemption somewhat while still leaving the US with a get-out clause.⁷⁶ Sir Malcolm admitted these amendments placed some nations ‘on a different footing’ but it was best to ‘recognise that these differences exist.’ Deference to the United States was explicit, but their obligation was strongly implied: -

...I think we may have confidence that the progressive spirit displayed by the United States people and Governments in regard to all industrial matters, the pressure which will be exerted by the powerful body of which our President is the head in the direction of any improvement of labour conditions which may be recommended by the Conference, the force of public opinion, and I may add the great influence which will be exerted by the International Labour Organisation itself will secure in the United States – even with the weaker provisions of the new clause – a real and effective effort to realise in legislation and reforms which may proceed from the International Labour Organisation.⁷⁷

The vote came back with ten in favour of the abridged Robinson proposals, with four abstentions from the Italian and Japanese delegations.⁷⁸ The European delegations’ closing remarks all reinforced how none of their reservations outweighed the importance of American participation. More crucially, however, all Labour Commission delegates sought to convey that a general consensus had been responsible for passing the entire scheme. The ultimate third reading vote on Article III saw the American motion for 1:1:1 lost however, eight votes to six, leaving the second reading’s decision on 2:1:1 to stand by a slim majority as Phelan prophesied.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p.362

⁷⁶ Ibid, pp.362-3

⁷⁷ TNA FO 608/238/513-4 (28) 19.3.19

⁷⁸ TNA FO 608/238/516 (28) 19.3.19; Italy abstained for obvious reasons; Japan abstained owing to ‘unfair advantages’ nor had they time to consult with their Government.

Phelan recalled that ‘the greatest controversy in the discussions of the Commission’ was finally settled.⁷⁹

After seven weeks of passionate discourse the Labour Convention for the Peace Conference was unanimously accepted.⁸⁰ The Japanese abstained, owing to their consistent position that their nation’s special circumstances put them at a considerable disadvantage. France’s Loucher was (again) absent.⁸¹ The Peace Conference secretariat received the final Labour Commission Report on March 24, and Gompers left Paris for good two days later on the 26. Articles XIX and XX would dilute Conference powers considerably, but Article III at least kept Governments invested in recognising labour’s demands, if not giving effect to them.

During his address to the Preliminary Peace Conference on April 11, 1919, Barnes was candid about how difficult it was to reach agreement until the right formula for compromise, especially regarding Article XIX, was found: -

... I want to be perfectly candid with the Conference – the net result of all of this is that a less degree of obligation falls upon a Federal State than upon other States signatory to our document. That is bad; it is regrettable but, as we found, unavoidable. The difficulty was there. We did not make it, but we had to get over it in the best way open to us.⁸²

Compromise was necessary and unavoidable on all fronts to finalise the Labour Commission Report and ILO Convention for the Peace Conference. A subsequent section discusses some of the lingering challenges facing Barnes once it reached the Council of Ten (soon to be Five). And, despite several animated

⁷⁹ *Origins*, vol. 1, p.138

⁸⁰ TNA FO 608/238/352, *Report of the Commission on International Labour Legislation and Draft Convention*, 3.24.19

⁸¹ TNA FO 608/238/524 (29) 19.3.19

⁸² George N Barnes, *Address to the Preliminary Peace Conference*, 11.4.19

exchanges between Barnes and Gompers, the AFL leader reflected late in life that ‘The British saw our real difficulty more appreciatively than other groups and Mr Barnes of the British Delegation helped in the development of proposals to which we could agree.’⁸³ Shotwell pragmatically assessed that ‘A detailed study of this whole incident shows how an apparently impossible situation can ultimately be solved if there is sufficient good will and patience on both sides, combined with a real desire to see the result attained.’⁸⁴ Unpicking the competing tensions underlying the third reading debates helps to better understand what the international zeitgeist was at the time, on the part of the Allies at least, and how national ideologies affected a changing (yet arguably still rigid) international complexion.

Women and the Labour Commission

The Commission finally dealt specifically with women’s employment questions on the penultimate day of the Labour Convention’s drafting, March 18 1919, when they received a delegation from the Inter-Allied Women’s Conference (IAWC). Women’s groups, particularly in relation to labour, did not appear to be adequately recognised during the Allied Peace Conference, and there is indeed scope for further research in a less constrained context than what this thesis can provide. Barnes was involved in dealing with their concerns to some extent as this section discusses. When he presented Margaret Bondfield’s two successful amendments to the Commission on March 11, he respectfully described her as ‘one of the leading personalities in the women’s Trade Union Movement.’⁸⁵

⁸³ Gompers, *Seventy Years*, pp.492

⁸⁴ Shotwell diary, p.206

⁸⁵ TNA FO 608/238/440 (19) 11.3.19

During the Berne Labour and Socialist Conference of February 1919, Bondfield represented the British TUC and was among other trade unionists including Leon Jouhaux with responsibility for drawing up a world charter for labour based on economic and social questions.⁸⁶ Bondfield's Allied Labour Commission proposals (previous section) ensured that women had at least some representation within the bureaucracies of the ILO Governing Body's bureaucracy and at the Labour Conference as technical advisers. Women's direct influence on Conference decisions was discounted, however, because as mere advisers they could not vote according to paragraph five of Article III.⁸⁷ The Peace Conference Directory reaffirms much that is already known about the status of women (from an institutional perspective) in the early twentieth century; one of the very few women listed among hundreds of international conference delegates is a secretary.⁸⁸

The IAWC held their own mid-February Paris Conference, running parallel with the Allied Peace and Berne conferences. The delegation which met the Labour Commission in March included members of the French Union for Women's Suffrage (USFS) including their secretary-general Cécile Brunschvicg,⁸⁹ and the Allied Women's Suffrage Association (AWS), among others.⁹⁰ The IAWC presented their resolutions in relation to labour matters affecting women to President Wilson, including the formation of an Allied women's commission to 'enquire and report' on

⁸⁶ *Origins*, vol I, p.75

⁸⁷ 1919 TUC Conference Report, pp.179-181; 'The Conference may add to any committee which it appoints technical experts who shall be assessors without power to vote.'

⁸⁸ Miss A.M. Saunders, sec. to NZ's Sir Joseph Ward; Gertrude Bell arrived in Paris on March 7 and played a key yet unofficial role in promoting Arab independence; see G. Bell (Paul Rich, ed.) *The Arab of Mesopotamia* (UK: 2016 Westphalia Press)

⁸⁹ Cecile Brunschvicg (1877–1946) was a co-founder of the French Union for Women's Suffrage (*Union française pour le suffrage des femmes*) secretary-general, the USFS was founded in Paris, 1908.

⁹⁰ The AWS was founded in America, c.1869

‘conditions and legislation concerning women and children throughout the world.’⁹¹

The IAWC campaign was successful in gaining admission of women to the League of Nations⁹² and permission from the Big Four to participate in select Peace Conference commissions.⁹³

The British Government had been lobbied for women’s representation on the Labour Commission as soon as the Peace Conference announced its formation in January 1919, and Barnes was given responsibility to inform them of the official position. Margaret Llewellyn Davis of the Women’s Co-operative Guild⁹⁴ wrote to Lloyd George of her ‘grave concern’ that no women had been summoned to the late January TUC and Empire Delegation labour meetings (previous chapter).⁹⁵ Barnes quickly apologised for any discourtesy, qualifying their omission by explaining that the TUC represented ‘a large number of women’ through their organisational affiliation. Bowerman’s chosen delegation, he wrote, ‘was presumably thought to be in a position to state the women’s case’, and although he supposed Bondfield could have joined them, it was not the Government’s decision to make.⁹⁶ He advised Davis that the Labour Commission had no responsibility concerning specific proposals and that it was going to establish a world labour conference, consisting of delegates chosen by organised, writing ‘it will be no part of our business then to differentiate as between men and women.’ Barnes gave Davis assurance that the Government was

⁹¹ Sharp and Stibbe, eds, *Aftermaths of War: Women's Movements and Female Activists, 1918-1923* (Netherlands: 2011 Brill), p.202

⁹² Sluga, *Nation, Psychology, and International Politics, 1870-1919* (UK: 2006 Palgrave Macmillan) p.166

⁹³ Winslow, *Women, Politics, and the United Nations* (USA: 1995 George Washington University), p.4

⁹⁴ Margaret Caroline Llewelyn-Davies (1861 – 1944), social worker, Hon. Secretary of the Women's Co-operative Guild, et al; see appendices.

⁹⁵ ILO 1.11.B11, MLD to DLG 28.1.19

⁹⁶ ILO 1.11.B11.2, GNB to MLD 2.1.19

‘fully alive to the question of women’s interests being safeguarded.’⁹⁷ Arguably these phrases were cold comfort to long-campaigning suffragists and advocates for better standards for women workers and their families.

Mary Macarthur,⁹⁸ trade unionist, ILP member and anti-sweating campaigner had also wired Barnes from England during the TUC-BED joint meetings, concisely stating that ‘organised women’s opinions on international labour treaties should be heard. Much dissatisfaction here among women’s organisations generally.’⁹⁹ Barnes replied somewhat limply that only tentative arrangements had yet been made, and that there would be ‘ample time for any representation you might care to make being duly, and I can assure you sympathetically, considered’ before the Peace Conference saw any proposals.¹⁰⁰ As stated, the women’s delegation was not received until the race to complete the Labour Commission’s final Report was underway.

Responsibility was again laid upon Bowerman for his male-exclusive choices, with Barnes asserting that those who participated ‘did put the women’s point of view so far as they knew, and I can assure you that it has always been kept in mind.’¹⁰¹

Examination of the brief minutes of the January 27-29 meetings, however, did not reveal any women-specific concerns being raised.¹⁰² The reply to Macarthur was very similar to that which Davis had received: specific proposals pertaining to either gender were not being considered, as they were ‘making provision for labour getting

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Mary Reid Macarthur (1880-1921), suffragist and strike organiser; first woman on the Scottish district council, executive on the Anti-sweating League, et al; see appendices. ODNB@<<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/30411>> accessed 8.6.16

⁹⁹ ILO 1.11.B12, MM to GNB 29.1.19

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ ILO 1.11.B12.1, GNB to MM, 31.1.19; the passage is cited as awkwardly as it was written.

¹⁰² Passim, section entitled ‘The Joint TUC – BED Sessions’, chapter two.

its due place... obviously we have no right to determine whether organised labour will select men or women for such purpose.’¹⁰³

The Proposals of the Inter-Allied Women’s Delegation

The Labour Commission met with a diverse configuration on March 18 combining representatives from more established and newer women’s groups.¹⁰⁴ Among them were the American journalists Constance Drexell¹⁰⁵ and Alice Riggs Hunt¹⁰⁶, and several unnamed French correspondents - the ‘lady journalists’ initially denied entry by Gompers upon arrival. It was Italy’s Mayor des Planches who gained their entry by challenging the standing press protocol which banned any reporting on the Labour Commission save official press releases, suggesting they attend as members of their national delegations.¹⁰⁷ Gompers then expressed the Commission’s ‘entire sympathy’ for their cause and their earnest wish to satisfy their claims: claims which supported women, children and even men.’¹⁰⁸ It is interesting to note the awkwardness of some of these exchanges as they are preserved in the historical records.

The French suffragist Julie Siegfried¹⁰⁹ noted how it was ‘a red letter day in the history of the feminist movement,’ and that she and her colleagues ‘wished to aid

¹⁰³ ILO 1.11.B12.1

¹⁰⁴ *Origins*, vol II p.272: IWC: Avril de St. Croix, Julie Siegfried (Fr), Mrs Tivoly (It); AWS: Brunschvig (Fr), Mrs Corbett Ashby, (GB), Mrs Borden Harrisan Mrs Rublee (USA), Miss Van den Pas (Belg); *Office des Interes feminins*; Mrs Duchene Fr); Independent and Confederated French Trade Unions; Miss Beckmans, Miss Bouvier, Miss Bouillot, and *La Ligue Francaise du Droit des Femmes*, Mrs. Maria Verone.

¹⁰⁵ Constance Drexel (1894-1956), reported from the front as a Red Cross nurse c. 1915; reported on the Paris Peace Conference and the International Conference of Women and International Woman Suffrage Alliance, et al; see appendices.

¹⁰⁶ FO 608/238/504; Alice Riggs Hunt (1884 – 1974) AWS, international journalist; attended the Peace Conference as special correspondent to the New York Evening Post.

¹⁰⁷ *Origins*, vol. II, p.273; the sittings were not strictly confidential; Barnes was the official LC spokesperson.

¹⁰⁸ *Origins*, vol. II, p.274

¹⁰⁹ Julie Siegfried (1848-922), French Union for Women’s Suffrage; in 1912 the National Council of French Women under her leadership became affiliated with the AWS in America.

the Commission in preparing for humanity and especially for women workers' happier and fairer conditions of life.'¹¹⁰ The delegations took turns presenting their declarations, comprising many lengthy but understandable statements of principles and aims, with a good deal of repetition, along with suggestions for the first labour conference agenda. Many of the IAWC's resolutions strongly resembled the wider social and economic aims contained within the draft Labour Convention Preamble,¹¹¹ indicating once again the international zeitgeist for a more transcendent internationalism that was long in development as Sluga aptly depicted in her research.¹¹² Shotwell observed that 'while their program was mainly concerned with the condition of women in industry, it covered as well most of the points in the Labour programme and even extended beyond it.'¹¹³ Their fulsome presentations caused some confusion, however, which may have affected their reception by a pressurised Commission: -

Mr. Barnes pointed out after the delegation had gone, the proposals would have been much more effective if they had been better organized so that the Commission could readily see which of them were intended to be inscribed in the Treaty of Peace and which were to be discussed in the Labour Conference in Washington.¹¹⁴

Gompers congratulated the deputation 'on the ability with which they had presented their case.'¹¹⁵ He referenced Bondfield's earlier proposals, assuring them the Commission 'had already considered a number of reforms of interest to women', and

¹¹⁰ FO 608/238/505

¹¹¹ Ibid; the full list runs from pp.275 – 285 in *Origins*, vol. II, giving some indication as to the length of the session.

¹¹² See, for example, the chapter 'The International Turn' in *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism* (US: 2013, University of Pennsylvania Press), pp. 36-9; 43.

¹¹³ Shotwell diary, p.216 fn.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ TNA FO/608/238/507

expressed his regret that they had not heard their ‘very interesting’ representations sooner.¹¹⁶

A sub-committee was tasked with narrowing down and refining the women’s proposals for a circulation document, and only those specifically moved by a member were discussed during two busy Labour Commission sittings as their final Report was drafted.¹¹⁷ Among those passed was the Preamble provision specifying the protection of juveniles in industry, largely at Arthur Fontaine’s behest. The Commission also approved their recommendation for ‘payment of maternity benefit to be made during the period for which work might be prohibited on account of childbirth.’¹¹⁸ Subsequently, item three on the October 1919 Washington Conference agenda dealt with “women’s employment (a) before and after child-birth, including the question of maternity benefit; (b) during the night, and (c) in unhealthy processes”.¹¹⁹ The replacement of the words ‘unhealthy industries’ with ‘unhealthy processes’, which, in part, extended protection to home workers, was another successful adoption.¹²⁰ More importantly a number of the women’s proposals had recommended that ‘a commission of competent women’ should determine what these unhealthy processes were, as women were being excluded from some relatively well-paid types of work that was less dangerous than others, based merely on their gender.¹²¹ This reflected the February IAWC resolution that ‘women’s labour commissions should be set up in every country consisting of representatives of Governments, Trade Unions, scientific women, and to whom should be submitted all

¹¹⁶ Ibid /508

¹¹⁷ TNA FO/608/238/522

¹¹⁸ Ibid

¹¹⁹ Protocol to Article 39, p.28 of the LC Report (passim)

¹²⁰ TNA FO/608/238/507

¹²¹ Ibid

exceptional legislative measures.’¹²² However, the desire for the establishment of what were essentially national women’s consultative committees was a radical departure from what the original British draft scheme envisioned. The final outcome for women in the Labour Convention was mixed and muted: while language regarding *healthy processes* was adopted on March 19, any proposals for establishing national women’s consultative committees were lost at the last minute on the 22nd. The British records noted such a thing was ‘of too exclusive a character’ and ‘there was no reason why a similar commission should not be set up as regards men.’ It was deemed to be a matter of national legislation and inappropriate for inclusion in the Peace Treaty.¹²³

Other proposals owing to a ‘sufficiently heavy’ Conference agenda were the principle of equal pay for equal work; half-time work on request for married women; equal technical education opportunities for boys and girls; and equal opportunity for women to enter all industries and professions. The Labour Commission had unanimously agreed ‘not to commit itself to the implications’ of equal opportunity for women. Gompers asked it be ‘expressly noted’ that he was ‘opposed to the admission of women into all professions or industries without exception’ and that he ‘would vote against any proposal to this effect.’¹²⁴ Fontaine, Vandervelde ‘and various other members’ were in agreement with this sentiment. Finally the Commission adopted recommendations for female labour inspectors, by nine votes to three. This became the last of the Labour Charter’s nine points for the Peace Treaty, adopted in June 1919.¹²⁵ The reduction in weekly hours of work from forty-

¹²² *Origins*, vol. II, p.275

¹²³ TNA FO/608/238/545

¹²⁴ TNA FO/608/238/522

¹²⁵ Shotwell, ‘Labor Provisions in the Peace Treaty’, *Monthly Labor Review*, (9) 2 (US Department of

eight to forty-four was rejected. The final agenda item adopted for the October Labour Conference extended the application of the 1906 Berne Convention on ‘the prohibition of night work for women employed in industry and the prohibition of white phosphorous in the manufacture of matches.’¹²⁶

Some limited benefit for women did result, either through integration into the permanent ILO machinery, the first Conference agenda or the Labour Clauses, but the meeting minutes captured the pervasive ethos that prevented progress at the pace they demanded. It has been effectively argued that women did not gain from the initial ILO settlement, especially from the deliberations of the international Conference.¹²⁷ Bondfield’s amendments at least gained women a place within the ILO machinery, indicating her understanding of the vital importance of having women at the centre of administrative structures. Barnes’ January correspondence with women’s groups indicated that their concerns were an afterthought, but his replies also denoted naïve optimism, inferring that universally improved labour standards could trickle down to benefit working women and their families as well as men. It was not widely considered that women had special needs as mothers, or wives tasked with caring for elderly family members.

Conclusions

This chapter demonstrated how much of the activity during the intermission suggests how often international diplomacy is shaped in hotels, dining rooms and the hallways and corridors of great buildings of state, much of which official records

Labor: 1919), p. 39 ; the Labour Charter is discussed in the next chapter.

¹²⁶ TNA FO 608/238/368 (Report of 24.3.19); there were only five in total: the 8-hour day/48 hour week; the prevention or provision for unemployment; and standards regarding children’s employment in addition to those already mentioned.

¹²⁷ Nore Natchkova and Celine Schoeni, ‘The ILO, Feminists and Expert Networks: the challenges of a non-proactive policy (1919-34)’ in *Globalising Social Rights*, pp.49-56

ignore. Surviving anecdotal accounts also give a sense of atmosphere that formal and often incomplete records often neglect. Phelan's accounts of racing around in Paris under cover of darkness and Shotwell's diary entries also denote how essential maintaining the smaller powers' support for the scheme was when American support was in doubt. Phelan and Shotwell's intermission work, and the intricate concession debates that followed, indicated that American recalcitrance owed more to political vicissitudes and will than to real legal boundaries. Although Gompers and Robinson were not experts on the US legal system's technicalities, they at least had a pragmatic understanding of the American legislature's limitations, much as Barnes understood the Peace Conference's attitude towards 'too progressive' labour reform. The extended Article XIX debates reflected the ideological gap between American individualism and European collectivism that guided most Commission arguments. Articles XIX and XX diluted the Labour Conference's powers considerably, but Article III at least kept Governments invested in recognising and potentially giving effect to labour's demands. Shotwell, officially an American delegate, provided an invaluable service to the whole Commission and reconstructed the United States' demands in a way that enabled the passage of the Labour Convention, albeit compromised. The fact that the 'British scheme' might have failed without him can not be ignored.

Gompers resented that the British created the scheme and took charge of the draft Convention's direction, and he went on the defensive early in the process. Barnes' in-depth familiarity with the scheme's technical aspects as they came up, soft-spoken as he was, may have been intimidating given Gompers' lack of experience in policy-making (chapter two depicted how he used his power to

organise American labour factions and broker deals through various means of persuasion). Unfortunately, Gompers' outsider mentality threw a shadow over the proceedings, and he almost resembled a Don Quixote figure tilting at windmills, exhibiting conflicting priorities that were ultimately thrown into turmoil by the Lodge campaign. He did, however, see the opportunity the Lodge campaign presented to defend his fundamental belief that the AFL declaration for a labour 'charter' was the Commission's top priority. Barnes and the British (and the Europeans) had the benefit of their Government backing them relatively unanimously while the American legislature was deeply divided over the League Covenant. Gompers' allegiance to two masters appeared to confound him so late in life. By contrast, Barnes expanded his role, advancing age notwithstanding, as the following chapters depict.

The inclusion of women earlier in the Labour Convention process might have resulted in more meaningful contributions to the ILO Covenant, but pervading attitudes kept many women in an economic sub-group comparable with agricultural labourers. Barnes exhibited both a conservative and inconsistent attitude towards women's labour, arguing on the one hand that all of organised labour would benefit through cooperation with 'benevolent' governments, while telling the women arguing for inclusion on the Labour Commission that such a decision was beyond his Government's remit. Barnes was adjusting to changing circumstances, yet his attitude towards women in the labour movement represented another paradoxical aspect of his political ideology: he did not seem to fully recognise that their desires were part of a wider international dialogue. To some extent the minutes of the women's delegation to the Labour Commission indicated the prevailing emphasis on

presenting the Peace Conference with a scheme not overly radical, yet at the same time the men's candour reflected contemporary negative attitudes regarding the female voice as a yet-transitioning type of internationalism emerged.

Chapter five: The Road to the Peace Conference

Although the Labour Convention for the ILO was finished and the Labour Commission concluded, Barnes' work was far from over. The immediate priority was to achieve adoption of the Labour Commission's Report ('Labour Report' or 'Report') by the Peace Conference so that the Organising Committee for October's International Labour Conference could begin working in earnest. Growing rumours that the American Senate would not ratify the League of Nations Covenant provoked great anxiety for residual Commission members still in Paris who were nevertheless determined that whatever happened 'labour would still have its parliament.'¹ As the Commission's acting General Secretary, Barnes worked diligently to avoid the Conference's postponement or cancellation by keeping the Labour Report high on the Peace Conference agenda as dozens of international delegations and sub-committees also jostled for attention. He attended numerous, disconnected meetings to publicise the Commission's work, while the complicated matter of the Labour Charter attached to the Report as an Annex, was yet unresolved.

Complications arose when the British Empire Delegation's Dominion leaders saw the March 24 Report and vowed to boycott the entire scheme, perceiving threats to their economies and their self-governing status. The significant changes they demanded were impossible for Barnes to undertake without the Peace Conference plenary's official authority. At the same juncture, Barnes faced great hostility from the Council of Five's foreign secretaries (save the British Foreign Secretary, Balfour) who disregarded his plea for a special plenary session to consider any late-breaking amendments or sanction the Commission's reassembly in order to satisfy the hostile Dominion heads.

¹ Shotwell diary, p.231

The Labour Charter

Shotwell assessed that the controversial, hastily-assembled Labour Charter was the main hurdle to overcome, as its clauses had been denied the ‘fire of debate’ received by the Labour Convention’s individual articles; nor were the British Empire and Dominion heads involved in its drafting.² Barnes nevertheless defended the controversial points (also referred to as ‘the clauses’) despite his own scepticism about their necessity since a number of Labour Commission delegations were so passionate about their codification. He was blunt in his memoir: -

For my part I attached little importance to the declarations. They were for the most part merely decorative phrases and declarations which had been repeated *ad nauseam* for a century or more.³

In retrospect Barnes was blasé about what came to comprise Article 427 of the Peace Treaty of June 1919, but at the time their debate set off a chain of events that challenged the ILO Convention’s progression to the Peace Conference. As an earlier chapter discussed, nineteen points of general agreement were compiled in February (largely at the behest of the Italian and American delegations), and refined between March 15 and 24 into a final ‘nine guiding points’ of general labour principles.⁴ The Charter was important for those who felt establishing mere Conference machinery was inadequate, and although Barnes believed in its statements of economic and social justice he deemed them inappropriate for an international treaty. Backed by Belgium’s Vandervelde, he made practical arguments against burdening the other plenipotentiaries with deep, fundamental labour questions, or proposals either too vague or too specific. In-depth consideration of the points commenced in mid-March just as the constitutional

² Ibid, p.229

³ Barnes, *FWWC*, pp.251-2

⁴ Barnes, *History of the ILO*, p.97, *Origins* vol. 1, p.191 provides a full summary an analysis of the points’ evolution. See Appendices pp. 286-8

aspects of the scheme came under intense scrutiny and the Commission raced to conclude its main business, the establishment of the annual International Labour Conference. It was composed and redrafted amid such confusion that it threw the whole of the Commission's work into doubt.⁵

An impatient unofficial sub-committee formed to draft its own seven-point expression of labour principles for the Treaty on March 15, presented by Italy's Mayor des Planches. In the light of this break-away committee, Barnes determined that nothing be sent to the Peace Conference without approval by a two-thirds majority, also moving that names be recorded against the votes for the proposed clauses.⁶ Delegation members argued to preserve their original wording and to present the full nineteen, unabridged clauses to the Peace Conference for insertion in the Treaty. While Barnes appreciated this sentiment, he consistently maintained that doing so would only lead to their rejection.^{7,8}

The February 1919 Berne conference had inspired already-impatient critics of the British scheme and the Allied labour plan to demand immediate satisfaction of their own programme via specific Peace Treaty affirmations. Barnes recalled the strident Leon Jouhaux, fresh from Berne with the CGT⁹ declaration in hand, 'breaking in upon us when we had nearly completed our work and denouncing that work in unmeasured terms.'¹⁰ Jouhaux insisted through fiery rhetoric that the Labour Charter had to compensate for an unaccountable ILO convention which, but for the Preamble's brief

⁵ Shotwell diary, pp.211-2

⁶ FO 608/238/486-8 (24)15.3.19

⁷ Shotwell diary, pp.211-2

⁸ ILO 4.06.LC.16; before being distilled into nineteen points the clauses ran to four pages; see appendices for the condensed version.

⁹ *Confédération générale du travail*– the general trade workers' union of France (Passim)

¹⁰ Barnes, *History of the ILO*, pp.42-3

statements, was devoid of any real intent. He proclaimed ‘There has been much talk about a new world... (and) there must be great social transformation.’ He warned of the danger in publishing a document ‘in which there was not even a reference to the right of a child, to education, or the position of women.’ The CGT declaration proclaimed how the Labour Conference would be just another inert advisory body, and that its Covenant intentionally employed vague language to prevent actual legislation.¹¹ His impassioned discourse did not alter the Labour Charter’s content, but it may have impressed upon Barnes the necessity for avoiding a cavalier attitude.

Barnes felt a flawed Labour Charter could defeat the entire concept of peace through labour. His primary assertion was that a ‘theoretical programme’ exceeded the Commission’s remit, and what it could reasonably produce. He argued that universal declarations were impossible since not every nation was represented at Paris, nor could a single screed accommodate all their stages of industrial development.¹² Ultimately no part of the Peace Treaty could comprise anything permanent which might conflict with future Conference decisions.¹³ Politically, Barnes was concerned that such a prescriptive text would conflict with Article XII of the League Covenant¹⁴ and create such a dangerous ‘diplomatic misunderstanding’ as to incite another war. Ultimately Barnes felt that a number of definitive ‘points’ could never permanently solve all of labour’s multitudinous woes: the Labour Charter was an impossible ‘compromise

¹¹ TNA FO 608/238/557 (30) 20.3.19 (out of seq/back of file)

¹² Barnes, *History of the ILO*, pp.43

¹³ TNA FO 608/238/556 (30) 20.3.19

¹⁴ The relevant section of Article XII of the League Covenant read ‘The Members of the League agree that, if there should arise between them any dispute likely to lead to a rupture they will submit the matter either to arbitration or judicial settlement or to enquiry by the Council, and they agree in no case to resort to war until three months after the award by the arbitrators or the judicial decision, or the report by the Council. In any case under this Article the award of the arbitrators or the judicial decision shall be made within a reasonable time, and the report of the Council shall be made within six months after the submission of the dispute.’ Source: Avalon Project, Yale Law School
<http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/leagcov.asp#art12>; accessed 10.4.16

between ideals and reality' in his opinion.¹⁵ On the other hand a Charter comprising a few, easily agreed labour principles would be valuable propaganda for swaying public opinion to create the right moral atmosphere for meaningful reform to take root.¹⁶ It should only imbue the Peace Treaty with the ethics that the annual labour conference would put into 'practical application.'¹⁷ In this way it may have represented to Barnes a vehicle for institutionalising some of his deeply-held Christian and communitarian socialist beliefs.

The earlier Labour Convention debates had exposed conflicting ideas about democracy and sovereignty that were clumsily met through the late addition of the Article XIX special protocols. The Labour Charter controversy deepened the dilemma, touching upon issues of national importance that seemed to confuse some Commission members as to their end goal. Barnes was bluntly described as 'leading the opposition to the charter',¹⁸ yet the minutes from this period showed the opposite to be true: he was deeply concerned that it be handled delicately. Much of the difficulty stemmed from misunderstandings and miscommunications about the Commission's remit in a pressurised and multi-lingual setting.¹⁹

Point fifteen: America and Freedom of the Seas

Samuel Gompers' ceaseless campaign to embed the AFL's 1918 declaration in the Peace Treaty took an interesting turn during the Labour Charter debates. The original draft point fifteen had read in part that 'seamen of the Mercantile Marine should

¹⁵ TNA FO 608/238/556 (30) 20.3.19

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ ILO 4.06.LC.16 (file 92), typed copy of Shotwell draft, collection of the various clauses for insertion in the Treaty.

¹⁸ Seth P. Tillman, *Anglo-American Relations at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919* (USA: 1961 Princeton University Press), p.308

¹⁹ TNA FO 608/238/560, (30) 20.3.19, e.g. discussion bet. Japan, USA and Britain re: what 'dangerous associations' meant.

have the right of leaving their ships while they are in port.’²⁰ In America, this ‘freedom of the seas’ was codified in the Seamen’s Act, 1915²¹ and held the same symbolic and practical relevance that the eight-hour day held in Europe. Gompers’ fundamental argument was that point fifteen extended to sailors rights which workers on the land already enjoyed.²² Gompers was still stinging over the earlier defeat of point thirteen regarding the abolition of involuntary servitude, something which closely resembled America’s constitutional amendment abolishing slavery.²³ His allegiance to an ideal the European delegations did not fully understand only complicated his mission. Barnes, once again backed by Vandervelde, maintained that point fifteen was ‘too special’ for the Charter.²⁴ His practical experience of Council of Ten meetings again led him to warn the delegates to limit their Peace Conference presentation ‘to the inclusion of a few declarations of principle of a general character’ since ‘only a very limited programme’ stood a chance of acceptance.²⁵

Gompers entered into an alliance with Andrew Furuseth, the outspoken head of the powerful International Seamen’s Union (ISU),²⁶ to ensure that that point fifteen became enshrined within the Treaty. Furuseth was an early and hostile critic of the League of Nations. Within days of the November 1918 armistice he began defending the Seaman’s Act that he felt it imperilled, and by December he was making his case to

²⁰ TNA FO 608/238/484

²¹ The November 1915 Act, unpopular with employers, sought ‘to promote the welfare of American seamen in the merchant marine of the United States; to abolish arrest and imprisonment as a penalty for desertion and to secure the abrogation of treaty provisions in relation thereto: and to promote safety at sea’. Publication No. 302. Sixty-third Congress (US Library of Congress); also known as the La Follette Seamen’s Act, named for progressive, anti-corporatist Republican Senator Robert ‘Fighting Bob’ La Follette (1855-1925); ran for US Presidency in 1924, also a League of Nations’ foe.

²² Ibid

²³ The point (fourteen) defeated read ‘The principle that no condition of involuntary servitude may exist except in punishment of a crime of which the person concerned has been duly proved guilty.’; see appendices.

²⁴ TNA FO 608/238/484

²⁵ Ibid /485

²⁶ Andrew Furuseth (1854-1938) leader of The International Seamen's Union (ISU) 1908-38; noteworthy for bringing about the Seamen's Act of 1915, the ‘Magna Carta of the American Seamen’; see appendices.

the Peace Conference.²⁷ Neither British officials from the Department of Shipping²⁸ nor the Secretary of the War Cabinet, Maurice Hankey, sympathised with his position. In January Furuseth wrote 'I could find no indication that they were even considering the Seamen's Act. The silence was so thunderous that it made me afraid.'²⁹ The refusal in February 1919 by both the Executive Board of the British Seaman's Union and the International Seafarers' Federation Conference to endorse similar protections for their sailors only reinforced his fears.^{30,31} Nobody embodied suspicion and distrust about the British scheme better than Furuseth.

In order to convince his skeptical AFL delegation that things were going well on the Labour Commission, and to prove he was not being 'carried away by the novel situation in which he found himself', Gompers often brought wary colleagues like Furuseth to the sessions.³² Furuseth became convinced that the European delegations were under the sway of a British-led, anti-American conspiracy with the Seaman's Act in the crosshairs. By March, Furuseth's angry *Memorandum on the Constitution of the Conference on Labour Legislation in Relation to the Seaman's Act of America* ('Seaman's memo') was circulating the Peace Conference. It accused the British Delegation of seeking to damage America's economic position by weakening seamen's protections, and it castigated the Commission for rejecting the point about involuntary

²⁷ Arthur Emil Albrecht, *International Seamen's Union of America: A Study of Its History and Problems* (Henceforth *ISUA*) (1923: US Govt Printing Office) pp.75-6

²⁸ These could have included Captain A G Hotham (questions on commerce, maritime transport & economic questions), or Thomas Lodge, Thomas Royden and Sir Osborn Holmden, assistant economic secy's to the Shipping Ministry; pp.11-12 of *Directories of the Peace Conference*, available online - <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1919Parisv03/comp1>; accessed 6.2.17

²⁹ Seaman's Report, p.204

³⁰ Albrecht, *ISUA*, p.77

³¹ 'Proceedings of the annual convention of the International Seamen's Union of America, 1919-20' (Henceforth Seamen's report), p.219

³² Shotwell diary p.220

servitude, et al.³³ Furuseth also took full advantage of hallway diplomacy during his campaign against the Labour Commission, surprising Shotwell (who referred to Furuseth as a ‘psychological curiosity’³⁴) in corridors more than once - requesting full accounts of their work, and engaging him in heated debate over how international labour legislation might harm sailors.³⁵ Shotwell felt Furuseth was unfair to the British, particularly Barnes, but those impromptu encounters gave him insight into how to change Furuseth’s mind long enough to allow the Commission to meet its pressing deadline. In the end, the Gompers-Furuseth alliance provoked another key American concession with Shotwell’s help.

Shotwell recalled Gompers’ near-obsequious deference to Furuseth,³⁶ and Max Lazard of the French delegation³⁷ remarked in 1931 that ‘Gompers watched him continuously and seemed to be terrified of him.’³⁸ When Gompers introduced the seamen’s clause for debate on March 15, Furuseth was not even present. Meanwhile, the American delegation had given its provisional support to the Article XIX sub-committee report (passim, previous chapter) with the reservation the Commission would once again vote on Article III and 2:1:1 (despite the matter being closed).³⁹ On March 19, Gompers seized his moment: linking point fifteen to 2:1:1 by claiming that it created an anti-labour bloc which could ultimately deny American sailors their right to leave ship, something tantamount to involuntary servitude.⁴⁰ He claimed that the Labour Conference could deny the aspirations of ‘the sailors of the whole world (who) hoped to

³³ Points 14 and 17; see appendices

³⁴ Shotwell quoted Preston W. Slosson (1892 - 1984), his secretary and fellow Inquiry librarian, became History Professor at University of Michigan 1921., Shotwell diary, p.222

³⁵ Shotwell diary, pp.212-3

³⁶ Ibid., p.221

³⁷ Max Lazard (1875-1953) French peace delegation economist, secretary general of International Association Against Unemployment.

³⁸ ILO Shotwell papers, interview c. 1931 (uncategorised at back of folder)

³⁹ His position was that 2:1:1 (the ‘British proposal’) presented an anti-labour bloc, preferring 1:1:1

⁴⁰ TNA FO 608/238/516, 19.3.19

secure similar rights' as those the US Seaman's Act enshrined. He then proposed new wording for point fifteen, with Furuseth's Seaman's memo attached, in advance of the final Article III vote.⁴¹ Barnes argued that point fifteen was superfluous since the London International Seamen's Conference had recently rejected a very similar provision,⁴² contending further that the contract between a sailor and a ship's Captain was unassailable, a mutual civil responsibility that Conference decisions could not nullify. The Seamen's memo 'did not appear to contain any serious arguments' to support the necessity for point fifteen, and Barnes, defended by Fontaine, asserted that no recommendation or convention could ever lessen 'the advantages already acquired by anybody of the working classes anywhere.'⁴³ The Commission was again at a standoff, Europeans versus Americans, with just two days to go and much to resolve.

Shotwell convinced Furuseth to consider a solution during a frustrating March 21st session. Commission members 'did not understand the situation and were anxious to get on with the drafting of the clauses' as Gompers repeated the previous days' oration solely for Furuseth's benefit.⁴⁴ Shotwell's personal notes mention that Barnes was not alone in showing annoyance, nevertheless Furuseth remarked sharply that 'the British are going to use the machine you set up' to betray the 1915 Act.⁴⁵ The matter seemed insurmountable until Shotwell convinced Furuseth to consider a clause stipulating that 'In no case shall any of the high contracting powers be asked or required, as a result of the adoption by the conference of any recommendation or draft

⁴¹ TNA FO 608/238/538, 21.3.19

⁴² *Proceedings of the annual convention of the International Seamen's Union of America* (1919-20), p.219

⁴³ TNA FO 608/238/538 (33) 21.3.19; the final paragraph in Article 405 in the Treaty came to read 'In no case shall any Member be asked or required, as a result of the adoption of any recommendation or draft convention by the Conference, to lessen the protection afforded by its existing legislation to the workers concerned.'; see appendices.

⁴⁴ Shotwell diary, p.222

⁴⁵ Typed publishing note, ILO Shotwell papers folder (uncategorised)

convention, to diminish the protection afforded by its existing legislation to the workers concerned.⁴⁶ Furuseth finally relented. Shotwell's clause became another Special Protocol to Article XIX, the 'safeguard clause', passing an exhausted Commission without objection on March 22nd to become part of Article 405 in the Peace Treaty.

Initially Furuseth was so pleased with Shotwell that he made him an honorary member of the Seaman's union.⁴⁷ Within days, however, the mercurial Furuseth revolted against the Labour Charter, and had even asked President Wilson to amend it behind an unwitting Gompers' back.^{48,49} The trajectory of the 'safeguard clause' is contested. Gompers claimed that he, Furuseth and Robinson drafted it themselves after the point fifteen debate had been intentionally postponed, without Shotwell's help.⁵⁰ Shotwell observed that this 'somewhat contradictory account' served 'as a caution to the historian in dealing with records of this kind.'⁵¹ It is unfortunate that the American minutes (previous chapter) end before this episode. The safeguard clause was another crucial American concession to the ILO Convention, but it did allow the Commission to finalise the nine points and attach the Charter to the Labour Convention.⁵²

A satisfied Gompers closed the Commission on March 24 apologising for the 'warmth' he displayed over 'ideas which were particularly dear' to him.⁵³ Admitting that his initial ambivalence had passed, he saw 'the possibility of leading a campaign in the United States in favour of the Convention', despite having 'wondered if it would not

⁴⁶ Article XIX Special Protocol in its draft form TNA FO 608/238/514-5, 19.3.19

⁴⁷ Shotwell diary, p.224; see the final paragraph to Chapter XIII's Article 405 in the appendices.

⁴⁸ AF to WW, 26.3.19 in *AFL Conference Report* June 1919, pp.411-2

⁴⁹ Furuseth attacked Chapter XIII at length during the above Conference, pp.400-412

⁵⁰ Gompers, *Seventy Years*, p.493

⁵¹ Shotwell diary, p.222 fn

⁵² TNA FO 608/238/549

⁵³ Ibid /552

be his duty to fight against it' until the last minute.⁵⁴ France's Colliard (responsible for nominating Gompers as Commission President) concluded that 'The Draft Convention might be said to be the child of Mr. Barnes... the Commission had done its best to endow this child with a strong constitution... (and that) the child was well equipped for a robust future.'⁵⁵ Barnes' experience was far from over, yet he looked back wistfully:-

It is a singular thing that people will oft fight harder over affirmation of abstract principles than concrete practical proposals for immediate application... And looked at in that light, some of them were at once found to be impossible... In a practical working of the International Labour Office they will, of course, play little part, excepting by way of reference, and the most that can be said for them is that, in the words of the Indian medicine man, 'if they will do no good, they will do no harm.'⁵⁶

The Borden declaration

The politics of national identity suddenly impacted upon the Labour Convention's progress and further complicated Barnes' role when the British Dominions demanded recognition as 'autonomous nations of an Imperial Commonwealth' from the Peace Conference just as the Commission's American problems neared their zenith on March 12. On that date the Canadian Prime Minister Robert Borden declared to the League of Nations council that Canada and the other Dominions had rights as individual signatories to the Treaty with the same 'power of review' as all High Contracting Parties ('HCPs'). Borden was deeply invested in the subsequent revision of the LON Convention to reflect his declaration since he held primary responsibility for drafting Part IX of the 1917 Imperial War Conference

⁵⁴ Ibid

⁵⁵ TNA FO 608/238/553

⁵⁶ Barnes *FWWC* pp.250-2

resolution, formally recognising the Dominions' voice in foreign affairs and securing their place at the Peace Conference.^{57,58}

Borden had been warned by Canadian Justice Minister C J Doherty⁵⁹ that the ILO Convention's Article XXXV did not match the recently revised language of the draft League of Nations covenant they had fought for. It still read 'The British Dominions and India shall have the same rights and obligations under this Convention *as if they were* separate High Contracting Parties', insinuating a lesser degree of independence with regard to labour decisions.⁶⁰ Doherty also insisted that the ILO Convention's Article VII effectively eliminated any Dominion presence from the ILO Governing Body, since the single representative for the British Empire in its entirety would no doubt be Britain, owing to its industrial prominence.⁶¹ The Convention's British authors, he wrote, deprived the Dominions of any 'real or effective national status.'⁶² Borden thereby advised Sir Malcolm that he was in complete agreement with Doherty on the very day he issued his independence declaration.⁶³ The Canadians hadn't considered that Article XXXV had been drafted in January when the League's composition was still uncertain (as discussed above). Sir Malcolm explained that this wording was intended to safeguard the position of the Dominions without denying their rights, giving them equal status with any HCPs eventually joining the League. He also

⁵⁷ *Report of Imperial War Conference, 1917*, Parliamentary Papers, Cd. 8566, p.59 in Dawson 'The Imperial Conference', *The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*(3), 1, 1937.

⁵⁸ ILO 3.06.D08; (file 65) (WCP 242) 12.3.19; Borden was principal author of Resolution IX of the Imperial War Conference (1917); his statement omitted India, so British Foreign Secretary Lord Montagu issued a separate declaration demanding independent recognition by the LoN. Montagu's declaration of Indian independence precipitated the Government of India Act (1919) given royal assent that December which introduced the slow progression towards responsible government there.

⁵⁹ C J Doherty (1855-1931) Canadian politician and jurist, delegate to the Peace Conference, delegate to the League of Nations, 1920-2; appointed to the Imperial Privy Council in 1920 for his service at Versailles.

⁶⁰ ILO 3.06.D10; Article 35 of the draft Convention became Article 421 of the Peace Treaty amendments.

⁶¹ ILO 3.06.D10, 10.3.19

⁶² Ibid

⁶³ ILO 3.06.D11, 12.3.19

deferred to the Americans for instigating the limitations Article VII placed on the Governing Body as they had ‘objected strongly’ to having the same representation as smaller nations. Sir Malcolm tried to reassure Doherty that the real power and authority of the ILO scheme lay within its annual Labour Conference.⁶⁴

President Borden remained unconvinced that the Dominions were on equal footing, and he was angered that Article XXXV had not been amended in the March 24 Labour Commission Report. He complained to Lloyd George and Barnes that the ILO Convention came from a British perspective that ignored Canadian conditions, being drafted free of any consultation with the Dominions as far as he knew.⁶⁵ Evidence showed that the Dominion leaders remained quiet on labour questions since the January TUC-BED joint meetings as discussed earlier, despite Phelan’s regular distribution of Labour Commission updates.⁶⁶ There are no records of any British Empire Delegations (‘BED’) meetings discussing the scheme after January’s joint drafting sessions, and as Barnes recalled, they seemed generally uninterested.

Hostility from the British Empire Delegation

Barnes led a series of meetings with BED members and Dominion leaders that commenced March 29 to deal with their eleventh-hour complaints. The British records held at The National Archive, formal in their tone as they are, capture a pervading sense of frustration on Barnes’ part that was only mitigated once his consistent backer, David Lloyd George, defended several of the arguments he had been putting forward for several months.

⁶⁴ ILO 3.06.D12, 19.3.19

⁶⁵ ILO B.07.B02, 27.3.19

⁶⁶ Phelan memoir, p. 169

Barnes had wrongly believed that ‘thrashing out any difficulties’ with the BED was just a procedural matter by then, and he was confident he could bring the scheme quickly before the Council of Ten, and the Peace Conference, soon after.⁶⁷ The draft Labour Charter’s point eight, however, which read ‘in all matters concerning their status as workers and social insurance (sic) foreign workers lawfully admitted to any country and their families should be ensured the same treatment as the nationals of that country’,⁶⁸ proved problematic. On March 27 Borden warned Lloyd George that point eight would force British Columbia to rescind legislation reserving ‘certain industries for white labour’, something which could arouse ‘the fiercest resentment (which) might lead to the most serious consequences.’⁶⁹ Point eight roused the rest of the Dominion heads to scrutinise the text, and a frustrating ‘detailed examination of the whole scheme’ ensued.⁷⁰ Sir Malcolm, Barnes and Shotwell made amendments ahead of the first March 29 BED session in response to Canada’s concerns, rewording the point in question to make clear it applied to a foreigner’s rights in labour matters only, but this did little to pre-empt further controversy. Australia, New Zealand and South Africa then avowed their total rejection of parallel membership between the ILO and the League of Nations, the key fundament of the ILO vision. Barnes was surprised by the hostility he encountered.⁷¹ The Dominion leaders’ demands to alter that essential relationship exceeded his authority as either acting Secretary to the Labour Commission or as a BED plenipotentiary.

⁶⁷ TNA FO 608/238/419

⁶⁸ ILO B.07.B02, 27.3.19

⁶⁹ Ibid; ‘in all matters concerning their status as workers and social insurance (sic) foreign workers lawfully admitted to any country and their families should be ensured the same treatment as the nationals of that country’ at March 24.

⁷⁰ *Origins*, vol 1 p 200

⁷¹ Phelan memoir, p.200

The varying arguments from the BED against dual ILO-LON membership that delineated national priorities were presented as economic concerns, yet they exacerbated enduring racial prejudice. Japan, for example, had made its membership in the LON dependent on the recognition of racial equality in its Covenant. The ILO Convention, meanwhile, gave special consideration to such developing economies which the Dominion leaders already felt gave them an unfair advantage. Australia's slight but intrepid Prime Minister, William 'Billy' Hughes, abhorred the dual membership, since a nation outside the League also remained outside the labour restrictions imposed by the ILO. Hughes feared Japan posed an economic threat as great as Germany's.⁷² Hughes angrily resolved to reject the labour scheme until dual membership was removed, supported by Borden, New Zealand's Massey and South Africa's General Smuts.⁷³ Barnes' insistence that he lacked the authority to make such a significant amendment at that stage fell on deaf ears.⁷⁴ Shotwell's diary recorded amusingly that although the BED feared the firebrand Hughes, treating him as 'an *enfant terrible* who might have broken loose', in actuality his 'worst disturbance was insisting that all his neighbours round the table sign his autograph book.'⁷⁵

India's Lord Sinha⁷⁶ also declared at that late stage that the ILO Convention simply 'would not suit Indian conditions' the way it stood.⁷⁷ The Maharajah of Bikaner, Ganga Singh, concurred, stating that while British India and the Indian States wanted to raise labour's standards, the scheme's proposals only suited European

⁷² TNA FO 608/238/421, 29.3.19

⁷³ William 'Bill' Ferguson Massey (1856-1925) Conservative Prime minister of New Zealand, 1912-35; Jan Christiaan Smuts (1870-1950) Prime minister of South Africa, 1919 -24 and 1939-48; see apps (x2).

⁷⁴ TNA FO 608/238/421

⁷⁵ Shotwell diary, p.260

⁷⁶ Lord Satyendra Prasanno Sinha (1863-1928) Prominent lawyer and statesman in British India; Indian National Congress, 1896-19; first Indian to be appointed as Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for India, 1919, et al; see appendices.

⁷⁷ TNA FO 608/238/410 29.3.19

conditions.⁷⁸ Universal imposition was ‘prejudicial’ to Indian industries, her people and her labour forces, he declared - ‘Indeed it would be no exaggeration to say that they would otherwise result in serious industrial and labour unrest.’⁷⁹ Barnes, as a progenitor of the Labour Convention, consistently argued that to ignore differing phases of social and industrial development could thwart the Labour Convention’s unanimous acceptance. National Archive records indicated that Barnes, at Borden’s insistence, personally chaired at least one sub-group at the end of March 1919 to specifically address the Dominions’ particular complaints, with India’s participation. Ultimately developing nations, i.e., Japan and India, were allowed extra time to consider how to enact Labour Conference decisions domestically.⁸⁰

Matters of national identity continually vexed Barnes. On March 31st, A.L. Sifton of the Canadian Customs Ministry⁸¹ challenged the ILO-League membership parallel, protesting Article XIX’s special protocol that gave preference to the Americans.⁸² He contended that ‘no Canadian Government could stand if it accepted the scheme as drafted.’⁸³ Notes of the next day’s session recorded Barnes’ clear irritation at such an objection being raised so late in the day.⁸⁴ He recalled that the Dominion group was ‘unwilling to abate any of its claims or implications even of a theoretical nature’ as

⁷⁸ Sir Ganga Singh, maharaja of Bikaner (1880-1943) Member of the Imperial War Conference, 1917; the only non-white member of the British Imperial War Cabinet; was ruling Maharaja of the princely Indian state of Bikaner (now Rajasthan) from 1888 to 1943, et al; see appendices.

⁷⁹ ILO 3.07.D17 (file 66 which is one of the ‘missing’ Geneva/Barnes files, copy found in COL 114) ‘International Labour Convention and Legislation’, note by Sir Ganga Singh 29.3.19

⁸⁰ The labour conference allowed one year for national ‘competent authorities’ to consider its decisions; paragraph 2 of Article 427 allowed Japan’s assent to by recognising ‘that differences of climate, habits and customs, of economic opportunity and industrial tradition, make strict uniformity in the conditions of labour difficult of immediate attainment’; Barnes, *History of the ILO*, pp.97-98

⁸¹ Arthur Lewis Watkins Sifton (1858-1921), jurist and politician, 2nd Premier of Alberta 1910-17, served three Canadian ministries including Customs c. 1919

⁸² They claimed 35 denied the recognition of self-governance the League Convention granted them, by referring merely to ‘High Contracting Parties’ and not individual states (this also tied into Article 7’s representation at the Conference and on the Governing Body, a complaint dropped with 35’s amendment; 19 discussed in previous chapter (see appendices).

⁸³ TNA FO 608/238/403, 4.1.19

⁸⁴ TNA FO 608/238/403, 4.1.19

they had recently ‘come in to full National stature’ as Peace Conference delegates themselves.⁸⁵ After the April 1st session, Barnes advised the BED secretary Captain (Clement) Jones⁸⁶ to abandon any hopes for a change in attitude, complaining: ‘the Minute I sent you the other day might well be torn up. I now realise that the BED will make no progress whatsoever unless they have a meeting with the PM in the chair.’⁸⁷

Barnes sent an urgent meeting request to Lloyd George that underscored his impatience. He reiterated to the Prime Minister how the Labour Commission had toiled away for many weeks, secure in the belief that the Dominion leaders were ‘quite cognisant’ of the features they now railed against.⁸⁸ The Dominion leaders, as it turned out, should have regretted harrying the Prime Minister: during the resulting April 3rd BED (discussed below) he fully backed Barnes, adamant that the Labour Convention would get to the Peace Conference with or without the Dominion heads’ agreement.⁸⁹

Resistance from the Council of Five

At precisely the same juncture on April 1st, Barnes encountered an impasse upon approaching the Council of Five’s Foreign Secretaries with the Labour Report. Their sanction was required for its presentation to the Peace Conference plenary ahead of the Treaty’s final drafting. Only the plenary conference could authorise the reassembly of the Commission to deal with any significant changes such as the BED group sought. Additionally, as Barnes argued, the plenary would give much-needed positive international publicity to the all-important Labour Convention and the nine points of the Labour Charter.

⁸⁵ Barnes, *FWWC*, p.251

⁸⁶ Captain Clement Wakefield Jones, CB (1880-1963) Assistant Secretary to the War Cabinet, 1916-20, and secretary of the Paris BED.

⁸⁷ ILO 3.07.B07

⁸⁸ TPA LG./4/3/7, GNB to DLG 31.3.19

⁸⁹ TNA FO 608/238/404, 4.3.19

Barnes was immediately rebuffed by US Secretary of State Robert Lansing.⁹⁰ Lansing had recently been lobbied by none other Henry Robinson, Gompers' Labour Commission ally, to bury the Labour Report. Gompers recalled that Robinson 'protested most vigorously' at the thought of the Commission re-forming without the presence of American labour representatives who had left France by then. Robinson personally sent Lansing a memorandum to that effect, also complaining to President Wilson that 'there had been no intimation' that the Commission's work was incomplete when they disbanded: its re-formation, he wrote, would be 'irregular, unfair and of harmful consequence.'⁹¹ There is evident discrepancy in the records about how the Labour Commission left things. The British minutes recorded that Gompers had said his late March departure 'would not prevent the Commission from continuing its work if that proved necessary.'⁹² It is extraordinary to consider that, despite the Article XIX concessions Robinson had successfully instigated during the third reading, he would soon attempt to derail the ILO Convention's passage this way.

On the morning of April 1st James Shotwell again proved his belief in the British scheme's end goal, struggling personally to promote the Labour Report to several uninterested American delegations and 'worn out' Commissioners.⁹³ Coincidentally, *The Times* had also prematurely published most of the details of the Report that morning, greatly angering Lindsay.⁹⁴ The newspaper positively assessed the new world labour bureau as 'the most valuable of all the by-products of the League of Nations (forming) a permanent bond of attachment between it and the democracies of all

⁹⁰ Robert Lansing (1864-1928) US Secretary of State, 1915-20, et al; see appendices.

⁹¹ Gompers, *Seventy Years*, p.496

⁹² TNA FO 608/238/517, (13 25 14 img), 19.3.19

⁹³ Shotwell diary, p.240

⁹⁴ *The Times*, 'Labour under the League of Nations', 4.1.19

countries.⁹⁵ Nevertheless, Lansing castigated Barnes during a sharp exchange for ‘constant leakage’ to the press by the British delegation (Barnes, as discussed, held responsibility for official press releases; how *The Times* received a copy is uncertain). Barnes argued back that the *Times*’ report only strengthened the case for a plenary hearing, as ‘Workmen did not read the *Times*.’ He warned the Council that the recent Hungarian revolutions were one example of the ‘lamentable effect’ the Peace Conference’s refusal to take labour problems seriously could have.⁹⁶ Arthur Balfour, the British Foreign Secretary, came to his defence, asserting that ‘nothing affected the working man so immediately as the report of this Commission’, insisting upon its prominence as ‘there was a real danger of the labour side of the Conference appearing to be neglected.’⁹⁷ Balfour sagely suggested Barnes appeal to the ‘Big Four’ leadership, something Barnes at first lamented.⁹⁸

After a considerable amount of to and fro, the Council of Five agreed to let Barnes distribute the Report to the Paris delegations and the international press, a few days before the all-important April 11 conference plenary. Lansing’s begrudging attitude was interpreted by Shotwell as indicative of a general resistance to changing traditional diplomatic practice, forcing recalcitrant, ages-old foreign offices to reconsider their roles in a rapidly changing, post-war world.⁹⁹ Shotwell noted this setback in his diary, sharing his British colleagues’ frustration and ‘uncertainty as to whether our work was really going to be given its place or snowed under by the interest in political and territorial settlement... the rigid mind of the foreign office official is

⁹⁵ Ibid

⁹⁶ TNA LAB/2/771/13; text of telegram Balfour to Curzon, 1.1.19

⁹⁷ Ibid

⁹⁸ David Lloyd George, Georges Clemenceau, Woodrow Wilson and Vittorio Orlando.

⁹⁹ Shotwell diary, p.241

about the last in the world to decide whether or not something should be done for Labour.’¹⁰⁰

After this seeming defeat, the British took a much-needed tea break in Shotwell’s room. Barnes, Shotwell wrote, ‘was about as hot a Briton as I have seen in Paris’,¹⁰¹ and Sir Malcolm further mentioned that Barnes ‘would have gone up to his room to have an old-fashioned cry, as he used to have in boyhood days’ if not for the reinvigorating tea. The next morning, Barnes penned ‘an exceedingly strong letter’¹⁰² to Lloyd George, reporting that the Foreign Secretaries had ‘shunted the whole thing’ onto the Prime Ministers. He stressed that he was ‘getting very uneasy’ about the Labour Convention’s future: -

No one appeared to regard the Labour settlement as of any importance. One of the secretaries said that, in his judgement, it was not Labour but territory which was agitating the mind of peoples. I combatted this idea as well as I could...

...if it gets abroad that the Peace plenipotentiaries are only taking a languid interest in Labour adjustment, then Labour will be very wroth and will have reason to be so... I am here to advise you on Labour feeling when necessary. That is my justification in writing you this long letter...

I know that Labour cares nothing about territory except to see such adjustment made as to leave no rankling sore for the future, and I know further that Labour does care about getting on with those things that concern the daily life of working folk. It is because of that I want our scheme through and our Committee at work.¹⁰³

A sympathetic Shotwell observed that at that juncture, Lloyd George could not ‘let Labour down completely after having left to Barnes the task of meeting the activities of Henderson and his friends by action at the Peace Conference

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Shotwell diary, p.241

¹⁰² Ibid

¹⁰³ TPA DLG 4/3/9, GNB to DLG 2.4.19

itself.’¹⁰⁴

Despite the attitudes of Lansing, Robinson, Furuseth and Gompers, the Labour Convention did have supporters within the American delegation. E. Stagg Whitin¹⁰⁵ of The Inquiry (the academic advisory group for the American Peace Conference delegation) told Phelan that he would personally ‘undertake a share in the propaganda in favour of the scheme’, suggesting grand reception committees ahead of the Washington Conference, along with railway tours and other entertainments that required the delegates’ arrival several weeks in advance. Phelan mused on the potential for numerous free train trips and dinners, while also suspecting that the AFL wanted to ‘unload’ the elderly Gompers into an ILO desk job ‘which he could assume with honour and which would take him out of America.’¹⁰⁶

Lloyd George rebukes the Dominion heads

Balfour’s suggestion that Barnes take his request up to the ‘Big Four’¹⁰⁷ was a fortuitous move since Lloyd George and Clemenceau both saw the immense value in acknowledging labour’s demands as a bulwark to revolution. Lloyd George subsequently took a hard line during the April 3rd BED session, admonishing the Dominions for a raft of ‘second reading objections.’¹⁰⁸ Barnes decried the resurrection of the Labour Commission when the Labour Convention was ready for the Peace

¹⁰⁴ Shotwell diary, p.242

¹⁰⁵ E. Stagg Whitin (1881-1946), Columbia University educator and author, member National Committee on Prisons and Prison Labour; he spoke on March 22 re: point sixteen and prison labour; his remarks are absent from the British record but contained within the ILO Record 1919-20 (pub. 1923); his testimony that legal precedent in the US and some British Dominions precluded prison labour from exploitation eased the point’s dismissal.

¹⁰⁶ TNA LAB 2/771/13, Phelan to Butler 4.4.19

¹⁰⁷ Ibid

¹⁰⁸ TNA FO 608/238/406, 3.4.19

Conference.¹⁰⁹ His circulation of a detailed justification for the ILO-LON dual membership had no effect on the scheme's most belligerent detractors, Hughes and Massey who extolled numerous economic arguments, including the dangers of cheap export dumping and increased 'sweated' labour from Labour Conference-excluded countries potentially.¹¹⁰ They even suggested amending the first Article of the Labour Convention, or that of the League of Nations Covenant itself, to suit them: this meant 'wrecking the whole scheme' as Barnes was concerned.¹¹¹

Robert Cecil (League of Nations' Council, and League of Nations Union, et al) supported Barnes, expressing the 'immense moral value' of parallel ILO-LON membership, and the importance this held for the British Labour Party: otherwise 'they will feel they have been betrayed, and will attack the League.'¹¹² Cecil argued further that the Allied ILO Conference would contain the revolutionary mindset, displacing ideas emanating from independent Socialist conferences which were 'inconsistent with the authority of the State', finally warning that the League of Nations would fail if its only role was to prevent war.¹¹³ Lloyd George reminded the Dominions leaders that they were not 'menaced with the dangers of Bolshevism' as the European continentals were, and were economically protected and favoured within the Empire with their own national legislatures.¹¹⁴ He warned the BED group that they risked provoking 'great disappointment in labour circles throughout the world', not to mention looking foolish by contesting their nation's own Report. Clemenceau, he added, was particularly

¹⁰⁹ TNA FO 608/238/404

¹¹⁰ ILO 3.07.B09.1, 'International Labour Legislation and the League of Nations', 1.4.19

¹¹¹ TNA FO 608/238/404, 4.3.19

¹¹² ILO 3.07.D09.2, minute PN Baker to Robert Cecil, c. 1.4.19

¹¹³ TNA FO 608/238/417, 8.4.19

¹¹⁴ TNA FO 608/238/404

anxious for an ‘earnest attempt to better the conditions of the working classes.’¹¹⁵

Phelan suspected that Leon Jouhaux’s numerous, public fulminations on the Allies’ great deception of the working classes were behind some of the Prime Minister’s assertions.¹¹⁶

The BED’s recalcitrance notwithstanding, the April 5 ‘Big Four’ meeting secured the audience with the Peace Conference Barnes had strived for.¹¹⁷ Balfour chaired two preparatory BED sessions ahead of the April 11 plenary wherein he stressed the importance of presenting a united front. Hughes, Botha and Massey nevertheless remained ‘impervious to arguments’ about joint membership.¹¹⁸ To specifically appease Canada, Barnes worked with Shotwell and Sir Malcolm on the language of Article XXXV with support from French, Belgian, Italian and American representatives. Wording agreed between Sifton, India’s Lord Sinha, and Barnes brought the Labour Convention’s language in line with that of the League Covenant, finally removing the distinction between the British Dominions and India from the other League members.¹¹⁹ Further consultations between Barnes, the Indian and Japanese labour delegates resulted in the second special protocol to Article XIX, as discussed above, which institutionalised special consideration of climactic conditions and ‘industrial peculiarities’ in developing economies.¹²⁰ Shotwell felt the consistent cooperation from

¹¹⁵ Ibid

¹¹⁶ TNA LAB 2/771/13, Phelan to Butler, 4.4.19

¹¹⁷ TNA LAB 2/771/13, Phelan to Butler, 6.4.19 (2nd note)

¹¹⁸ TNA LAB/2/771/13, Phelan to Butler, 8.4.19

¹¹⁹ TNA FO 608/238/437 (appendix) 9.4.19; Article XXXV’s first paragraph was to be deleted, and the second amended to read ‘Any colony or possession of any of the High Contracting Parties which in the application of such High Contracting Party is recognised as fully self-governing by the Executive Council of the League of Nations shall have the same rights and obligations under this Convention as if it were a separate High Contracting Party.’ See appendices.

¹²⁰ Phelan memoir, p.200; granted one year to consider conventions, and no more than eighteen months from the conference’s conclusion.

the Japanese, and new-found agreement with India signalled that ‘unanimous consent’ was on the horizon.¹²¹

Skepticism over the novelty of the Labour Conference endured, however, as expressed by Massey through his belief that industrial matters would remain best served under the existing Empire system.¹²² Nevertheless the fate of the ILO Convention was up to the Peace Conference to decide.

The strategic dismissal of the Labour Charter

To ease the ILO Convention’s passage, the BED resolved not to discuss the contentious nine points of the Labour Charter during the April 11 plenary. Its proposal for the Treaty would not be raised, and, if mentioned, the points only referred back for reconsideration and/or redrafting. Balfour was perhaps their most vocal opponent, calling them ‘a mixture of platitude and paradox.’ Hughes claimed he would ‘veto the whole scheme’ if the revised Labour Report even included its annexed Charter.¹²³ Harold Butler and Barnes both believed the nine points were ‘valuable propaganda’ if nothing else; a concept Butler felt neither the BED nor Lloyd George fully grasped.¹²⁴ The unfortunate Charter was still attached to the Report, however, so Balfour instructed the BED Secretary Maurice Hankey to prevent their adoption any way he could.¹²⁵ Barnes’ own plan was to submit a two-part motion to approve the Labour Commission Report and its Labour Convention in order to authorise the Washington Conference Organising Committee, giving the plenary enough to consider without discussion of the

¹²¹ Shotwell diary, p.251

¹²² TNA FO 608/238/437, 9.4.19

¹²³ Ibid

¹²⁴ TNA LAB/2/771/13, Butler to Phelan 9.4.19

¹²⁵ Ibid

Charter.¹²⁶ Phelan advised Butler of Barnes' 'delicate and difficult' situation regarding the points: -

Nobody wants them at all events in their present form, and nobody wants to undertake the job of suggesting that they be referred back or of suggesting any action that would look like shelving them. Barnes is suggesting to Balfour that when they have suffered a good deal of criticism, as no doubt they will, that he might come in as a sort of conciliator and produce a suggestion to refer them back...

The difficulty of course is that while it is not our particular business to burn our fingers pulling other people's chestnuts out of the fire, at the same time if we do nothing the 9 points will be simply talked out or adjourned and so disappear forever and with them any 'labour clauses' at all.¹²⁷

The plan ultimately worked. The Labour Convention, unanimously adopted on April 11, gave the Organising Committee the authority to initiate the massive task at hand, as Barnes had hoped. On the day, he presented the Labour Commission Report free of notes in an effective speech, as the *Manchester Guardian* reported: 'his voice was excellent, and his speech - solid, quiet, dignified, sincere - seemed to typify the character of his contribution to the cause of progress'¹²⁸ Phelan recalled Barnes' plain-speaking 'natural eloquence... (that was the) characteristic expression of the philosophy that had guided him throughout his public career.'¹²⁹ Barnes had determined that his consistent backer, the Belgian Socialist Emile Vandervelde, would also address the plenary session.¹³⁰ His improvised yet grand eloquence emphasised the strong bond between Britain and Belgium: -

I am convinced that Mr Lloyd George at any rate, who has just so

¹²⁶ TNA LAB/2/771/13, Phelan to Butler, 10.4.19; also TNA FO/608/238/370 'Motion presented in the name of the British Delegation', etc., 11.4.19

¹²⁷ TNA LAB/2/771/13, 10.4.19, op cit.

¹²⁸ *Manchester Guardian*, 12.4.19

¹²⁹ Phelan memoir, pp.172-3; Barnes' was the sole speech Phelan quoted at length; also 'Proceedings of the Preliminary Peace Conference, Protocol Number 4, April 11, 1919' reproduced in *Origins*, vol II, p.391 (Henceforth *Proceedings*)

¹³⁰ TNA FO 608/238/437, 9.4.19

successfully solved one of the gravest conflicts between Capital and Labour that has ever arisen in the world, will not dream of contradicting me on that point...

...there are two methods of making the revolution which we feel is happening throughout the world, the Russian and the British method. It is the British method which has triumphed in the Labour Commission; it is the one which I greatly prefer, and it is for that reason that with all my heart I support the conclusion of my friend, Mr Barnes, in expressing the hope that they may be accepted by the conference, and that the events of today will show that the working classes, having been one of the decisive factors in winning the war, shall receive their due recompense at the moment in which we are about to make peace...¹³¹

Barnes mentioned the Labour Charter only briefly, and after a number of somewhat 'desultory' speeches lauding the day's significance, its discussion was thankfully averted.¹³² Philosophically, Barnes' speech was underpinned by his fundamental communitarian, socialist and moral beliefs. He again recalled the class divisions and community harm that labour's miserable, demoralising pre-war condition created, laying upon the world the great danger which yet menaced peace. It was the 'long arm of circumstance which has cast the devil's chain around the workmen' that was responsible, he declared, and not the 'conscious cruelty' of any particular class: -

We are seeking now, for the first time in history, so far as I know, to get the willing co-operation of all concerned – States, employers and workmen – engaged in a common desire to improve the workingman's condition in all countries.¹³³

Barnes was frank about the sacrifices made to raise the bar for all: -

I want to be perfectly candid with the Conference, the net result of all of this is, that a less degree of obligation falls upon a Federal State than upon other States signatory to our document. That is bad; it is regrettable, but, as we found, we had to get over it in the best way open to us...¹³⁴

...We believe our scheme will give life and strength to the League of

¹³¹ Ibid

¹³² Shotwell diary, p.258

¹³³ *Proceedings*, p.391

¹³⁴ *Proceedings* p.394

Nations by bringing it in contact with the daily life of the people. We believe that our scheme gives hope and will bring help to those whose lives are seared and scarred by toil and sorrow.¹³⁵

The Times of April 12 published Barnes' entire speech, declaring that the Peace Conference had adopted 'British Methods' for world labour.¹³⁶ The *Manchester Guardian* commented 'it was essentially Britain's day', and that the Commission, 'not too happy in its chairman, owed a great deal to the tact and skill of Mr Barnes.'¹³⁷

President Wilson praised Barnes' words and the 'admirable document' before him, expressing his pleasure at hosting the first international Labour Conference, giving assurance that invitations would follow.¹³⁸ Shotwell allegedly advised Wilson that an announcement of invitations was prudent, and suggested that the nine points should be accepted at least in principle since the final amendments to Article XIX were still being drafted.¹³⁹ Wilson never mentioned the nine points, and only spoke again to regret that Samuel Gompers could not express American labour's sentiments.¹⁴⁰

The Borden amendment and a hasty conclusion

A peculiar turn of events precipitated Robert Borden's verbal amendment to Article XXXV which may have given his March independence declaration greater publicity on the world stage. Through 'some mistake' Article XXXV's April 9 revision to suit Canada (previous section) was absent from the Labour Report the Peace Conference had received.¹⁴¹ Borden noticed the omission immediately, and conferred with Lloyd George, Balfour, Clemenceau and President Wilson about introducing the

¹³⁵ Ibid p. 396

¹³⁶ *The Times*, 12.4.19

¹³⁷ *Manchester Guardian*, 12.4.19

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Shotwell diary, op.cit, pp.255-6

¹⁴⁰ *Proceedings* p.397

¹⁴¹ *Origins*, vol I, p.210

amendment verbally, recalling ‘it was at once agreed that, under the circumstances, such an amendment was not only appropriate but necessary.’¹⁴² Borden’s insistence on the equality of Dominions with all HCPs to the Peace Treaty and League Covenant was further reflected in changes to Articles I, VII and XVIII of the Labour Convention by the time it became Chapter XIII of the treaty signed on June 28 1919.¹⁴³

Clemenceau finally determined the Labour Report’s unanimous adoption in an instant. Barnes noted the French Prime Minister was ‘scenting long discussion’ about the Labour Charter.¹⁴⁴ Shotwell also observed Clemenceau’s impatience, recording that the Charter’s dismissal owed as much to this as to Balfour’s sheer loathe of it. Balfour was busily striking the nine points from the Labour Report in such a way that his neighbours Clemenceau, Lloyd George and Wilson, would surely notice.¹⁴⁵ Shotwell recalled how Clemenceau made his stance characteristically clear before adopting the freshly-abridged Report: -

...When he came along to where Barnes, Sir Malcolm and I were discussing the situation, Barnes asked him where the Nine Points were. Clemenceau was coughing as he paused to talk to us. He had an irritation from his wound, and the bullet still lodged in the back of the lung, but he was in excellent spirits and laughing through his coughing fit, tapped his chest with his forefinger and said in good English, ‘Points! I have one of them in here.’¹⁴⁶

It is interesting to consider Balfour’s exaggerated behavior, as Shotwell reported it, since the British had already made a firm decision to avoid the Charter’s discussion.

¹⁴² Ibid; cites Borden’s personal testimony; Borden’s amendment was ‘The Conference authorises the Drafting Committee to make such amendments as may be necessary to have the Convention conform to the Covenant of the League of Nations in the character of its membership and in the method of adherence.’ See appendices.

¹⁴³ The Labour Chapter (Chapter XIII) in the Peace Treaty numbered its articles 387-427; see appendices.

¹⁴⁴ Barnes, *FWWC* p.251

¹⁴⁵ Shotwell diary, pp.258-9

¹⁴⁶ Clemenceau survived an assassination attempt by a self-confessed anarchist on February 19; *The Brisbane Queenslander* 1.3.19; Shotwell diary, p.259

It may be reasonable to argue that Balfour was trying to impress upon the recently-wounded Clemenceau that this would only extend an already long-winded plenary. It is also noteworthy that Samuel Gompers, one of the Charter's strongest advocates, remained overseas, nor did any representative of American labour speak on April 11 1919. America did not officially participate in the 1919 Washington Conference despite hosting it: Gompers observed the conference for a single day as the AFL's delegate, nor did the US Chamber of Commerce send any representatives.¹⁴⁷ Ultimately, the Peace Treaty containing Chapter XIII, the 'Labour Chapter', was never ratified by the US Senate owing to Article X of the League of Nations Covenant, and Woodrow Wilson spent his final days campaigning in support of the treaty until he fell too ill to carry on.¹⁴⁸

Barnes' declaration of faith: *The Perils to the Workers from Materialism*

This section concludes with examination of an address Barnes delivered in September 1919, shortly before traveling to the Washington Conference as a representative of the British Government, because it virtually encapsulates his political ideology and personal beliefs in a single keynote speech. *The Perils to the Workers from Materialism*¹⁴⁹ ('Perils') was delivered during the International Conference on Labour and Religion at London's Browning Hall Settlement.¹⁵⁰ The 'The Religion in the Labour Movement' conference was also fulfilling something of a propaganda mission in

¹⁴⁷ Albert and Palladino, *The Samuel Gompers Papers*, p.72 fn

¹⁴⁸ See John Milton Cooper, *Breaking the Heart of the World: Woodrow Wilson and the Fight for the League of Nations* (UK: 2001 Cambridge University Press); Article X would have bound the United States to defend another League nation if it came under attack.

¹⁴⁹ George N Barnes, 'The Perils to the Workers from Materialism', (Henceforth *Perils*), *The Religion in the Labour Movement* (London: 1919 Holborn Press), pp.10-17; Vandervelde, Appleton, Henderson and Lansbury were among many international speakers.

¹⁵⁰ Leonard Smith's *Religion and the Rise of Labour* (henceforth *Rise*) (London: 1993 Keele University Press) is very good reference work for better understanding of the historical relationship between religion and organised labour.

reaction to recent activity by the Anti-Socialist and Anti-Communist Union ('ASU').¹⁵¹ The Conservative-led ASU had long contended that religion and socialism were incompatible, warning that the Non-conformist movement had become infiltrated and politicised.^{152,153} In his speech Barnes used biblical references to make some points while harnessing the nascent language of the Wilsonian 'new internationalism' to make others. A brief analysis of this key address closes the thesis' main research section because it bridges the ideological gap between nineteenth-century communitarian socialism and the labour ideals of the twentieth, epitomising Barnes' non-dogmatic ideology and his political trajectory. Barnes also, rather cleverly, championed the underlying ethos of the ILO and League of Nations without mentioning either organisation by name, further demonstrating his adept manipulation of positive propaganda.

Barnes argued that the war had proven beyond all doubt that the workers' life had become dominated by the ethos of quantity over quality. Describing how malign forces had exploited working class conditions, he traced a path between the self-interest of economic materialism and the greed of the Central European Powers which had led to total war's devastation. He denigrated the lust for territorial expansion responsible for 'the world being 'bathed in blood... (and) brought almost to the verge of

¹⁵¹ The pro-self-reliance, largely Conservative ASU, conceived in 1908, viewed Edwardian-Liberal social welfare as socialist, and felt Labour MPs set a dangerous precedent. After the war it was briefly the Reconstruction Society before becoming the ASU-ACU, launching attacks on Labour intellectuals like Laski, Dobbs, Dalton and Tawney (Source: Barberis & McHugh, et al (eds) *Encyclopedia of British and Irish Political Organizations: Parties, Groups and Movements of the Twentieth Century* (London: 2000 Continuum Press), p.319

¹⁵² Smith, *Rise*, pp.100-104

¹⁵³ For more on the Labour Church/Non-conformist link, and the development of British Socialism. See Mark Bevir, 'The Labour Church Movement, 1891-1902', *Journal of British Studies*, (38), 2, Apr. 1999, pp.217-245

bankruptcy.’¹⁵⁴ He also accused the traditions of laissez-faire capitalism and classic

Liberalism of playing a role in this ‘cult of selfishness’: –

...this latest exploit of militarism is only the flower and culmination of a hard and acrid philosophy of life, which had taught that everyone was to seek his own welfare and that somehow or other it would work out in the welfare of everybody.¹⁵⁵

War profiteering was another aspect of materialism’s evils, Barnes said, taking the opportunity to uphold his 1917 Government’s food policies as evidence of benevolent State action toward addressing want and social ills.¹⁵⁶ In reaction to recent acceleration of Syndicalism and hard-left permeation into the labour rank-and-file, Barnes referred to ‘unseen forces’, ‘lop-sided organisations’ and ‘academic agitators’ who yet threatened the world’s new-found peace, without directly naming Bolshevists or militants: -

...Some organisations seem to be getting under the control of those who have little idea of reciprocal service. Some of them I am afraid, on the Labour side, are getting under the control of those who want to pull down the pillars of the State on the off-chance that something more to their liking will arise from the ruins... they poison the springs of public life.¹⁵⁷

He alluded to the alternative of beneficent organisations, i.e., the ILO Conference, the State solution to the evils of materialism: -

If organisation is going to be used rightly, it ought to contribute to the common good and equalise the chances of life... The workmen in the mass want to take their proper place in the community on equal terms with other people. There is an ardent desire on the part of the working class as a whole for respect and recognition and for greater actual and social equality.^{158,159}

¹⁵⁴ Barnes, *Perils*, p.11

¹⁵⁵ Ibid

¹⁵⁶ Ibid

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, p.13

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, p.11

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, p.16

In a nod to the Christian communitarian church movement, he professed the great ‘need for friendliness’, a universal, basic human requirement that transcended capitalism and whatever economic system that might follow.¹⁶⁰

Barnes channelled the practical and ethical aims of the ILO and the Labour Conference, the collective security ethos underpinning the League of Nations, the communitarian socialist ethics of the previous century and the divisive nature of Bolshevism in his *Perils* address. The word ‘socialism’ was never uttered nor did he employ any associated slogans or jargon. Numerous allusions to historical materialism and evolutionary socialism bore the influence of a man educated in the previous century, yet one who embraced modernity by capturing the emergent language of the Wilsonian world view, the ‘new’ Internationalism. The war, he said, had been a uniting experience despite its horror; an object lesson proving that there is ‘something in mankind that cannot be bludgeoned. There is something that guns cannot kill...’¹⁶¹ Man’s natural desire for peace and co-operation, and the desire for a greater internationalism in the post-war world, was framed quite simply by Barnes as faith.

Conclusions

During the Labour Convention’s third and final reading, Barnes continued defending the British scheme’s tenets and its core features against an increasingly obstructionist American delegation, a process complicated by criticism and conjecture over the nine points’ purpose and principles. The draft of the ILO scheme, although British in name and by design, was largely the product of consultation with European (and British) organised labour, and the continuation of long-held belief about achieving

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, p.14

¹⁶¹ Ibid, p.11

social justice through workers' welfare. It was difficult for Barnes to balance majority opinion against the tactical necessity of United States' backing, but with the help of Shotwell and others he succeeded. America was not affected by the war as Europe was, and Gompers' attitude particularly annoyed the British and Belgian delegations: despite their relentless and sometimes bitter opposition it was shown that the bulk of the US arguments were fallacious. The Americans appeared to be grandstanding on the international stage to make a statement about their position at the Peace Conference and show their allegiance to the AFL back home. Barnes gave as good as he got during heated Commission arguments, nevertheless he was always very fond of 'Sam', even keeping him abreast of the Labour Charter's progress in May 1919.¹⁶² Barnes refrained from maligning the American delegation in his memoir, although his private letter to Gompers does refer to American obstinacy during the last-minute redrafting of point eight.

Barnes' pivotal role as British Empire Delegation plenipotentiary and Labour Commission spokesperson appeared as though it would be a boon, especially during the earlier phases and readings of the scheme. Because it had always been imagined that the first international Labour Conference would probably take place before the League of Nations' constitution was settled, as a matter of urgency and because of war-time promises some of the language was left intentionally vague to afford flexibility. While the Labour Commission beavered away, the League of Nations Council also advanced its programme, and as it did sensitive issues of national identity and territorial sovereignty in the new world settlement made Barnes' dual role awkward. When the Dominion leaders backed him into a corner as a labour commissioner, Barnes played his

¹⁶² Albert and Palladino (eds) *The Samuel Gompers Papers* (vol, XI, 1918-21) op ci, pp.69-70; the April 11 and 28 Labour Charters are also compared there.

political card, calling in Lloyd George to staunch hyperbolic claims that threatened the ILO scheme's survival. The nationalistic, racial overtone of Borden's concerns over 'white labour' being jeopardized by the Charter's point eight was the antithesis of the Peace Conference and League of Nations philosophy; however these sentiments also represent a truthful picture of where 'national' race relations stood in the industrial sphere of 1919: despite pre-war liberal ideals and an intellectual desire for a world 'supranationality' and an international mindset, the economics of labour were still drawn along 19th century lines of race and national identity (much like Barnes' lingering naivety around women's place in the labour realm).

Similarly, when the Council of Five's foreign secretaries jeopardised the Labour Report's chances before the Peace Conference, the Prime Minister helped Barnes secure the crucial special plenary session with the Big Four's sanction. Barnes' loyalty to Lloyd George paid off, as did his practical, pragmatic understanding of contemporary political and diplomatic procedures. While the Peace Conference symbolically represented a 'new internationalism', put into practice through the adoption of seemingly open covenants and a full embrace of the conference system, Barnes also recognised that politics was still largely a matter of who your friends were. By sticking close to the 'establishment' and potentially sacrificing friendships he had culminated over two decades, he was able to present what was essentially a moderate socialist tract to the Peace Conference. But Barnes did not do it alone; he utilised a national and international network of support to achieve the Allied Powers' sanction for a world labour conference as an integral part of a permanent institution tasked with maintaining industrial and world peace. The Labour Convention for the ILO ultimately represented the way in which national identity shaped such a vast concept as an international vision

for world labour, not to mention a (more or less) binding treaty for world peace. Barnes was interestingly placed at the centre of numerous, shifting ideas and practices that bracketed the world's nascent experience of total war.

In this manner another phase of Barnes' transformation from 'British labour representative' to international diplomat and labour spokesperson can be detected. As discussed in Chapter Two, Barnes sacrificed some of the desires of his own labour peers (the British TUC delegation) to suit the BED and Dominion group's priorities. The BED's subsequent ignorance of the Labour Commission's progress signaled to Barnes that this gesture was unappreciated. Meanwhile, Lloyd George's consistent sanction in Paris undoubtedly raised his international profile. The dual effect gave Barnes something of a springboard for his post-Cabinet and Peace Conference work as a world speaker, writer and educator on the history of organised labour and the International Labour Organisation's creation, after a long and oft-challenging career as a British politician and Trade Unionist.

6 After the Labour Convention

The International Labour Office, officially established in Geneva in the summer of 1920, survived initial intense criticism from the left of being ineffectual, and from the right of being too expensive and a product of socialist bias,¹ yet it has carried on oversight of the annual Labour Conference. The ILO website is a valuable resource for studying its post-1919 trajectory and details of the international labour and humanitarian legislation it has produced.²

It is an understatement to say that the story of Barnes and the founding of the International Labour Organisation did not end in April 1919. He remained fundamentally involved in a number of ways, and the continuing diversity of his role is noteworthy. He endeavoured to get the Labour Charter adopted, keep the Washington Conference on track, and hold the British Government to its Paris commitment in a continuing effort to raise international standards for labour. Barnes continued to lecture on the work of the ILO and write about his Paris experience until he was too unwell to carry on. Space does not allow for a full survey of his multi-faceted work from 1919-1938 examined during this research, but it is hoped that a subsequent publication about George N. Barnes's personal life, and his dedication to organised labour's social and political concerns will follow. This epilogue chapter discusses some of it briefly, with mention of some of the resources and archives that hold this material, further demonstrating that George N. Barnes was integral to the ILO process and remains an

¹ Ramsay MacDonald's 'The Attack on the I.L.O.' in *The Labour Magazine* (Joint Publications Department of the Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party: 1923) defended the ILO as the only virtuous Peace Conference outcome, using financial data, in a sharp rebuttal to Lord Rothermere's *Daily Mail* criticisms. TUC HD 4797 1924; reprinted in the booklet *Labour and the League of Nations* (London: 1924 League of Nations Union)

² <http://www.ilo.org/global/standards/lang--en/index.htm>

important figure for further study concerning the history of the British Labour Party, the organised labour movement, and of International Relations.

The Balfour-Borden revisions to the Labour Charter

The Labour Charter underwent a number of revisions and passed through many hands before its acceptance by a Peace Conference plenary on April 28. Barnes knew that its adoption was essential for maintaining the credibility of the Commission and the League in the public eye. At the same time it was also feared that major amendments would greatly upset the proletariat, as the European press had erroneously reported the Charter was adopted by the Allied Powers on April 11. The nine points first underwent minor revision over several days by Shotwell, Barnes, Sir Malcolm, Robinson, and David Hunter Miller among others, point eight receiving special attention due to the Japanese delegation's concerns.^{3,4} As predicted the British Foreign Secretary Balfour stepped in to recast them, and his April 16 draft combined the pithy nine points into six more complex ones which implied a lessened obligation on the Conference to uphold them.⁵ An April 17 letter from Henry Robinson to Samuel Gompers noted that 'our friends the British, combining with Buzfuzz Shotwell, have been rolling around' trying to find a solution that suited all concerned parties. It also reiterated Robinson's deep upset that Barnes had approached the Council of Five for a special plenary session, or the right to reform the Labour Commission without Gompers in it.⁶ Barnes reported to Balfour that the Dominions and Indian delegations approved of his redraft, but that the Belgians and Italians had rejected it, the latter firmly believing that the nine-point

³ Shotwell diary, p.262

⁴ Ibid, p.263

⁵ ILO 3.17.D01; see appendices.

⁶ ILO 3.17.D02, HR to SG; apparently 'Buzfuzz' was their nickname for the moustachioed Professor Shotwell. In the letter Robinson also let Gompers know he had written to Wilson to complain about Barnes' reforming an incomplete Commission.

Charter had been adopted during the earlier plenary.⁷ The Americans also resented Balfour's draft, so Barnes was very anxious about presenting it. He felt obliged to remain loyal to the original nine labour clauses for the treaty, and he confided to Sir Malcolm that 'we are left for the moment in the soup...

...if we go forward with things as they are of course I have no option but to adhere to the resolutions as they came from our Commission. It is true that I am a member of the BED but I am here as Vice-Chairman of the Labour Commission and in the absence of agreement I cannot depart from their findings.⁸

Further complicating things, Italy had threatened to leave Paris following President Wilson's retraction of the Treaty of London, and his declaration that Italy would have to be satisfied with retaining control of the primarily Italian areas of Trentino and the Tyrol.⁹ Following that development, Balfour passed the Charter to Vandervelde and Borden for revision, suggesting the Canadian Prime Minister move it as an amendment at the plenary.¹⁰ Borden's resultant April 26 Labour Charter was approved in his hotel room by Vandervelde, Robinson, and Japan's Otchiai,¹¹ with the BED accepting it just hours before the April 28 plenary session. Barnes, as Chairman of the Labour Commission, moved for the original nine points 'as a matter of duty' during the sitting, and Borden's amendment was seconded by Vandervelde receiving unanimous adoption.¹² Barnes experienced a considerable amount of trouble during the protracted Labour Charter affair, but ultimately the nine points survived through a combination of international efforts and shared interest. Although the Charter was used as a tool of

⁷ ILO 3.21.B01, GNB to AJB 23.4.19

⁸ ILO 3.08.B06, GNB to MD, 24.4.19; abbreviation of BED was Barnes'.

⁹ Dissatisfaction over this aspect of the Versailles settlement is seen as a precursor to the rise of Fascism in Italy; see Rene Albrecht-Carrie 'The Present Significance of the Treaty of London of 1915', (Henceforth Carrie) *Political Science Quarterly*, (54), 3, Sept. 1939, pp.364-390

¹⁰ ILO 3.08.B06, GNB to MD, 24.4.19

¹¹ Kentaro Otchiai (1873-1926) Minister Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan at The Hague.

¹² *Origins*, vol 1 p.217; see Appendices for comparison of the Charter versions.

diplomacy regarding the Italians, they left the Peace Conference but returned on May 5 after accepting some compromises.¹³

At the same juncture, Barnes was involved some Article VII controversy while the Drafting Committee amended the adopted Labour Convention to suit still-dubious Dominion members.¹⁴ Canada's Customs Minister Sifton was agitating for Canadian membership on the ILO Governing Body, and Barnes quickly assessed that he was doing Borden's bidding. He revealed his suspicions in a letter to Sir Malcolm, referencing the Old Testament by likening Sifton to Esau and Borden to Jacob.¹⁵ Borden seemed happy to let Sifton appear as the instigator, judging by Barnes' remark: 'I do not think Sir Robert cares a twopence about it.'¹⁶ Over the following days, Barnes reported to Sir Malcolm that Sifton was still 'bleating into the ear of anybody he can attract to listen to him about Article VII... needless to say I am keeping off the grass.'¹⁷ The Canadians' success in changing the Article as discussed¹⁸ held little implication for the British labour delegation, but the related correspondence revealed another aspect of the Dominion dimension that Barnes faced. This correspondence preserved in the Geneva ILO archives' 'Shotwell papers' indicate further research to completed, and may comprise more 'lost' original Barnes papers.¹⁹

¹³ Carrie, op cit. pp.373-4; 378-9

¹⁴ Article 7 of the draft Convention became Article 393 in the Peace Treaty, see appendices.

¹⁵ Esau was unattractive and wicked because he took the Lord's gift for granted and sold his birth right to his brother Jacob for a meal as a child. Jacob later used deception to claim his brother's rightful fortune from God, yet he was nevertheless 'the chosen one' to settle Israel.

¹⁶ ILO 3.08.B06, GNB to MD, 24.4.19 (67/7054); Sir Malcolm replied this was 'a little unfair on Esau!' ILO 3.19.B10, SM to GNB 26.4.19 (67/7099)

¹⁷ ILO 3.08.B07, GNB to SM 30.4.19

¹⁸ Treaty Article 393 determined the Conference would determine annually a 12-member GB, 8 chosen by nations of 'industrial importance', the League would determine this if there was uncertainty; see appendices.

¹⁹ Box 114 in COL but marked as '3.17.001-5', resembling the ILO filing system but there not accounted for in the Geneva indexes.

The ‘German notes’ and the International Labour Conference

Barnes was also deeply involved in the debates over German admission to the ILO and the Labour Conference, and Germany’s inclusion on the ILO Governing Body.²⁰ The Parliamentary Archive’s Lloyd George papers hold much correspondence attesting to Barnes’ concerns over the welfare of the German working people. He was unwilling to have the Labour Convention placed in the same document as the war reparation terms. Barnes frankly and repeatedly expressed that the terms were unreasonably punitive and potentially destructive, and that the occupation period should be ‘divided by about ten.’²¹ His remarks to Lloyd George invited the Prime Minister’s request for alternative financial and diplomatic solutions which Barnes was keen to provide. He argued that ‘in view of the growing tendency towards international solidarity of democratic forces’ it was important make Germany’s repayment period brief as possible.²² To back his assertions that the financial reparations could be devastating, Barnes went on an information-gathering visit with Shotwell to the formerly occupied German zones. His detailed report of June 22nd concluded that people in rural areas, children, the poor and the elderly had suffered most during the war and stood to bear the brunt.²³

On May 7 the German delegation was presented with the Allied peace terms. Count von Brockdorff-Rantzau immediately presented the British Empire Delegation with counter-proposals that included an alternative League of Nations plan, and a

²⁰ Treaty Article 312 of the League Covenant (Part X, Section VIII) granted Germany a provisional seat on the ILO Governing Body; see appendices.

²¹ TPA LG 4/3/17, 2.6.19; DLG’s reply showed surprise and dismay at Barnes’ seeming change of heart; LG 4/3/18.

²² TPA LG F/4/3/21, 3.6.19

²³ TPA LG F/4/3/22, 22.6.19

Charter for International Labour Law proposals.^{24,25} Philip Noel-Baker (Robert Cecil's legal counsel), deemed the section on labour law 'distinctly tendentious' from the outset, setting the tone for the decisions following. The German suggestions were never going to be seriously considered.^{26,27} The residual Labour Commission, headed by Barnes, believed the Allied plans were much more practical than Germany's, an opinion shared by the TUC.²⁸ The volley of notes between the Allied and Associated Powers and Germany, and many relevant documents now in the National Archive, gave support to Barnes' counsel, and both the New York and Geneva Shotwell collections reference copies of missing original 'Barnes letters' in this area. Barnes again played a pivotal role, corresponding with the Big Four and the Foreign Office regarding the tone and content of the Allied responses, not just concerning Germany's labour proposals.²⁹

Barnes naturally discussed Germany's labour scheme with the British TUC. Henderson advised Barnes that British labour felt the German plan simply did not improve upon the Allied Labour Commission's plan in any meaningful way, and that trying to arrange an international Trade Union conference before adoption of the Peace Treaty as Germany suggested, could delay its signing indefinitely.³⁰ In regard to the planned Washington Labour Conference for October, Barnes' opinion also matched that of the TUC: the reform of labour could not be universal unless Germany was admitted

²⁴ TNA FO 608/167/75 (translation)

²⁵ TNA FO 608/167/78; the German proposals were submitted to the League of Nations Council and Peace Conference Secretariat

²⁶ TNA FO 608/167/84 (Article VII of the 'German note')

²⁷ TNA FO 608/167/36

²⁸ TPA LG 4/3/16, 16.5.19, AH to GNB

²⁹ TNA FO 608/167/1-419, and FO 608/239/19-33; ILO 97-113, and scattered across COL files 110-113, which are poorly organised.

³⁰ TNA LAB 2 771/25 16.5.19 AH to GNB; the LAB 2 771, 774 and 775 files contain much documentation about the WC Organising Committee, the TUC and German conference admission, etc., also poorly organised

to the Labour Conference ‘early’ (before her League status was confirmed), and to the League of Nations immediately upon the signing of the Treaty.

The German note(s) did not alter the Labour Convention or its Charter before they went into the Peace Treaty. Ultimately the Supreme Council determined on May 31st that Germany could attend the Washington Conference as delegates, and that the Conference would decide upon its permanent ILO membership and position on the Governing Body. Foreign Office files in The National Archive contain a great deal of material regarding the Government’s assessment of the situation and Barnes’ involvement, including notes on Brockdorff-Rantzau and speculation that he was a figurehead placed by the Russians and/or minority German socialists.³¹ These records indicate further that the reorganisation of labour at the time transcended industrial considerations to include matters of high diplomacy and international relations, all involving Barnes’ multi-functional contributions.

The IFTU and the Washington Conference Organising Committee

Travel complications prevented the German delegation from attending the Washington Conference of October-November 1919.³² Nevertheless, Barnes expended a considerable amount of energy over German admission during the summer and autumn of 1919, a troubling matter that threatened to indefinitely postpone the planned Conference. His efforts there are another unexamined area of his ILO-related work that was beyond the scope of this study. For example in August 1919, Barnes acted as counsel and intermediary to the Foreign Office when the newly-formed International Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU) issued its declaration condemning the Washington

³¹ TNA FO 608/126 and 608/135

³² TNA CAB 24/95/79, *Report on First International Labour Conference*, GNB/SM 30.12.19

Conference to failure if former enemies or the central powers were barred from participation.³³ The Amsterdam IFTU conference of July 1919 resolved to boycott the ILO unless Germany was fully reintroduced into labour's international circle, a position supported by French and British organised labour.³⁴ It had been observed that the IFTU overlooked the fact that Germany's Washington Conference attendance was already assured, regardless of her pending League status, yet the IFTU stated it would only cooperate with the Washington Conference if 'the representatives of the trade union movement of all countries' were invited without exception.³⁵ The IFTU also resolved that the ILO Convention and its Charter disregarded the Berne programme of February 1919.³⁶ There is a great deal of correspondence between Barnes and the IFTU Presidents William Appleton³⁷ and Edo Fimmen³⁸ in both Shotwell collections (original and copy) wherein Barnes argued that the Amsterdam conference had not based its decisions on sound information, and he spent a great deal of time refuting Appleton's misunderstandings and misapprehensions.

Sir Malcolm was deeply concerned about the high politics underpinning the Amsterdam declaration. Private correspondence captured his nervousness about a 'truculent' Germany taking advantage of the situation the IFTU had created, and Barnes trying to calm him down. He wrote to Barnes on August 6, suspicious that 'German intrigue' was behind it all, worried that they would try to force the Berne manifesto on

³³ The IFTU Congress ran 25 July – August 3, comprised delegations from the United States, Germany, Great Britain, France, Holland, Austria, Germany, Belgium, Denmark, Spain, Holland, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Czecho-Slovakia and Luxemburg, thereby playing an important part in getting the former enemy countries admitted to the Washington Conference. Leon Jouhaux was IFTU Vice-President.

³⁴ The resolution is reproduced in *Origins*, vol. II, p.447 (doc 59)

³⁵ Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria. COL files 110, 114– 121 contain numerous copies and some original Appleton-Barnes and related correspondence.

³⁶ *Origins*, vol. II, p.447 (doc 59)

³⁷ W A Appleton (1859-1940) IFTU founder; founded the International Lacemakers' Federation, 1900, General Federation of Trade Unions, 1903, et al; see appendices

³⁸ Edo (Eduard Carl) Fimmen (1881-1942) Dutch multi-linguist trade unionist and editor; General Secretary of the International Transport Workers' Federation, 1919-42, et al; see appendices.

the Washington Conference and re-open the entire ‘labour super parliament’ debate.

‘They will do their utmost to destroy the scheme of Labour Organisation as laid down in the Peace Treaty and substitute something else’, conceding to the IFTU could ‘throw the Conference into confusion and absolutely destroy any chances of its producing useful resolutions’, he wrote.³⁹ In early September 1919, Italy and France were still publicly questioning German admission to the ILO. Barnes advised Sir Malcolm that America ‘really holds the trump card’ since their Conference invitations had implied that Germany and Austria would *not* be attending. Britain could not invite them, Barnes wrote, lest they be accused of overstepping. He said he would make some investigation into the Americans’ attitude personally.⁴⁰

Several months of the Organising Committee for the Washington Conference’s time were occupied with the all-important issue of former enemies of the Allies attending the ILO’s first conference. Barnes nevertheless glossed over the entire affair in his memoir, neatly stating that the Washington Conference easily ‘settled down to business’ once America invited Germany and Austria to send delegates, just as the ‘Big Four’ had earlier agreed in Paris.⁴¹ Barnes’ sanguine recollection, along with Harold Butler’s and Sir Malcolm’s contributions to Volume one of *Origins*, negate the tremendous anxiety the German notes and IFTU declarations evoked in a quintessentially Whiggish narrative. Barnes was not a member of the Organising Committee, but a Government official deeply invested in the Allied Labour Scheme. The Organising Committee authorised by the Peace Conference was restricted to a purely administrative role (essentially that of international civil servants) and could not

³⁹ ILO 5.14.B02, MD to GNB 6.8.19

⁴⁰ ILO 5.16.B08, GNB to SM 9.1.19; ILO files 114-127 contain numerous WC/Appleton/Germany-related documents.

⁴¹ Barnes, *FWWC*, p.270

base its decisions on political imperatives. Not being an official member, Barnes was able to offer Sir Malcolm and his colleagues his informed opinions confidentially, probably helping them to prioritise their numerous complex tasks under the constraints of time.

The Washington Conference

This thesis does not intend to analyse the history or numerous implications of the 1919 Washington Conference, or its Conventions. It offers instead a digest of Barnes' Conference role that concludes with a summary of his efforts to see the Washington Conventions ratified in Great Britain. For Barnes, getting the Labour Convention into the Treaty was the fulfilment of his 1918 electoral mandate to secure peace through internationally raised welfare standards for labour. He used this achievement as justification for resigning from the Lloyd George cabinet in 1920. Barnes then retired from public life completely in 1922 after leading the fight in the House of Commons for the ratification of the Washington Conventions, with a great deal of cross-party support.

The Washington Conference⁴² determined that the ILO would be established at Geneva with M. Albert Thomas as its Director, and a provisional Governing Body was selected. Barnes believed that the 'chief value of Washington' was that 'it launched the organisation for world regulation of labour as a going concern. Some critics said that it would not work. Washington proved that it could and did work: -

...the Labour Organisation has taken root and is now available for men and

⁴² 29 October to 29 November 1919. The daily minutes of the Washington Conference at the TUC Archive (HD 4791) revealed attending members of the British delegation for each sitting, and the National Archive's CAB 24/89/22 27.9.19, and 23/12/13 7.10.19 record the suggested Government, labour and employers' delegates.

women of Governments and both sides of industry to hammer out their International Labour difficulties on the anvil of common sense, and in doing so, lift Labour – especially in the poorer paid countries – from the category of merchandise to the higher ground of the humanities.⁴³

Barnes was a Conference Vice President and chaired several of its sessions. His blunt, direct and sometimes amusing manner of holding court is preserved in its daily reports.⁴⁴ Barnes also chaired the 48-Hour Week Convention to Special Countries Committee, overseeing its ten sessions.⁴⁵ Barnes presented the full Report he and Sir Malcolm wrote to the British Government on December 30 following his brief cable on the Conference's final day which reported general success.⁴⁶ He advised among other things that 'Opportunity was afforded the women advisers of putting their case on the floor of the Conference, as well as in Committee, when matters specially affecting women were under discussion.'⁴⁷ The sections of the Report that Barnes wrote himself were apparent, and he referenced Gompers' one-day appearance: -

...we have no hesitation in saying that the Conference, in spite of the abstention of the United States of America, was a great success. It kept its feet on mother earth. Its findings are on the whole practical, and such as can be adopted by Governments in the near future... there appeared to be a change in American public opinion in regard to it, and a desire in Governmental circles to pay it some attention – a desire, however, which came too late to eventuate any practical shape.⁴⁸

When Barnes wrote his 1923 memoir he was apparently still stinging from his recent experience of holding the British Government to account over its obligation to ratify the Conventions, as discussed below. He remarked sharply that the threat to the ILO came

⁴³ Barnes, *FWWC*, pp.272-3

⁴⁴ TUC HD 4791: the complete record 'International Labour Conference. First Annual Meeting' is available at the TUC Archive in London.

⁴⁵ Ibid, pp.322-6

⁴⁶ TPA LG F/4/3/30

⁴⁷ TNA CAB 24/95/79

⁴⁸ Ibid

not from ‘that which was predicted at Paris by the minority who opposed the plan’ but from the precise opposite: Governments who defaulted on their pledges to labour: -

Government delegates have voted for conventions and recommendations... as for instance the British delegation at Washington – by express injunction of their Governments - and then these Governments have failed to honour their bond. That is the danger confronting the Labour Organisation and it is a very serious one.⁴⁹

Barnes said that world governments could not expect working class cooperation in maintaining industrial peace if they ‘persist on disregarding conventions and recommendations of Labour Conferences, then they must not expect Labour to take it lying down. Labour accepted the Labour Chapter of the Peace Treaty in a spirit of goodwill.’⁵⁰ If Labour withdrew as a consequence of the State’s default, the ILO would be ‘doomed to futility... it would become a mere bureaucratic machine, a body without a soul, for it would lack that stimulation that only Labour can give’, he wrote.⁵¹ Barnes was disappointed by the Government he had supported during and after the war, which he had consistently argued to his Commission challengers was a friend to labour, not its foe.

Barnes’ involvement with the Organising Committee showed his unwavering resolve that Washington Conference would proceed despite any difficulties arising over Germany and Austria’s admission. The National Archives’ LAB 2 series contains numerous files recording his involvement in the technical and financial aspects of its arrangement, including arranging proper secretarial support and in delegating enough labour and technical advisers to adequately represent mining, women workers and ‘other interests’. His efforts, made in coordination with the TUC Parliamentary

⁴⁹ Barnes, *FWWC*, p.273; Barnes consistently capitalised Labour when referring to the movement.

⁵⁰ Ibid, p.274

⁵¹ Ibid, p.275

Committee, were in part to avoid the impression that the Conference was merely an extension of British Empire's industrial primacy.⁵² Given the difficulty the League of Nations faced in the United States, it has been argued that without Barnes' able steering of the Organising Committee and coordination of numerous points of view as well as resources, the Washington Conference might not have happened when it did, if it happened at all.⁵³

Barnes and the Washington Conventions before the House of Commons

Barnes retired from the back benches in 1922 when the Labour Party announced it would field a candidate against him for his Glasgow Gorbals seat. He greatly regretted leaving the ILO without a spokesperson in the House of Commons. Barnes also expressed grave disappointment over the British Government's attitude towards the first International Labour Conference by not presenting the Conference Report and White Papers pertaining to the Washington Conventions to the House for ratification, seventeen months after their adoption in May 1921 (the time limit was one year for 'nations of industrial importance' like Great Britain). His anger was yet apparent two years later: -

The Labour Office under the Peace Treaty was good enough to be used as a tag at political meetings by Government spokesmen, but the obligations under it were forgotten as soon as the cheers subsided... The Government, by signing the Peace Treaty, were pledged to submit to Parliament the recommendations and conventions adopted at International Labour Conferences, but Mr Lloyd George was, in this respect, badly served by the Labour Ministry. That Ministry, indeed, as regarded the Labour Office, evaded all that it could evade, and only did what it was forced to do by pressure and publicity.⁵⁴

⁵² LAB 2/771/17

⁵³ Phelan, *Yes and Albert Thomas*, pp. 10-11

⁵⁴ Barnes, *FWWC*, pp.293-4

He refused to implicate his friend Lloyd George, in opposition at the head of the doomed National Liberal Party and still reeling from the Chanak Crisis and the Carlton Club rebellion that led to his October 1922 resignation.⁵⁵ Barnes had sensed the Government was already betraying its obligation to labour by June 1920 when he argued for the passage of the Women, Young Persons and Children (Employment) Bill during its second reading, in relation to what the Washington Conference sought to achieve.⁵⁶ Shortly thereafter, the Ministries of Health and Labour decided together not to present the Washington Conventions to MPs for full scrutiny, based on their interpretation of Article 405. In October 1920 Oswald Allen of the Ministry of Health asked Sir Malcolm Delevingne for an explanation of Article 405, requesting draft copies of it dating from the Commission's time in Paris (when it still comprised Articles XVIII and XIX). Allen cited confusion over a line reading 'or other action' which concerned putting conventions into effect in federated states. This essentially called into question who the 'competent authority' on labour questions really was. The opinion was forming that treaty-making power rested with the Crown, and that the decision to ratify or reject conventions could sidestep the House altogether.⁵⁷ Sir Malcolm was baffled. He replied that the British delegation had never contemplated that a labour convention could evade Parliamentary scrutiny.⁵⁸

The Health Ministry's contention, soon adopted by the Ministry of Labour, was that Article 405 left it in doubt where 'competent authority' lay, and the Law Officers of the Crown took up the case. In December 1920 the Cabinet determined, on advice of the

⁵⁵ Lloyd George's trajectory from 'the man who won the war' to political obscurity as 'the goat in the wilderness' is well portrayed in Kenneth Morgan *The Age of Lloyd George*, pp.77-98 et al.

⁵⁶ 10 June 1920 vol.130, col.732 in WOMEN, YOUNG PERSONS, AND CHILDREN (EMPLOYMENT) BILL. <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1920/jun/10/women-young-persons-and-children#S5CV0130P0_19200610_HOC_553>

⁵⁷ TNA LAB 774/5 (these records are not catalogued by piece number)

⁵⁸ TNA LAB 774/5

Attorney General, that it was ‘unnecessary to bring before Parliament, by resolutions or otherwise, those draft Conventions which the Government decided not to ratify.’⁵⁹

Given Barnes’ steadfast loyalty to Lloyd George, it is unlikely he knew about this at the time, but the Independent Liberal-headed Ministry of Labour of 1921 was resolute that it would not present the Washington Conventions on May 21st.⁶⁰

Barnes blasted the Ministries of Labour and Health for their non-compliance in compelling terms, moving ‘That, in the opinion of this House, the Conventions adopted at the International Labour Conference under the League of Nations should be submitted to Parliament as the competent authority... In moving this Motion I desire to call the attention of the House to the failure of the Government to give effect to the Labour Chapter of the Paris Peace Treaty.’⁶¹ He declared that competent authority for labour questions lay with the Ministers of the Crown, not *the* Crown, as the Independent Liberal Minister of Labour Thomas Macnamara⁶² had concluded. Macnamara had also argued that labour matters were still best decided by arbitration between Trade Unions, employers and workers, revealing his innate scepticism about the ILO conference system,⁶³ the very argument New Zealand’s Massey made when contesting the British scheme’s innovation in 1919.⁶⁴ His personal beliefs reflected a lingering reluctance among Government Ministers to surrender sovereignty for labour decisions to the International Labour Conference.

⁵⁹ Ibid

⁶⁰ By spring of 1921, Lloyd George’s coalition was under threat from Asquith’s resurgence and Independent Liberals, and his hold on Conservative Unionists was also slipping.

⁶¹ http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1921/may/27/international-labour-conference#S5CV0142P0_19210527_HOC_4

⁶² Thomas Macnamara (1861-1931) Educator and Liberal MP for Camberwell and Camberwell North, 1900-18; 1918-24; Parliamentary and Financial Secretary to the Admiralty, 1908-20; a close Lloyd George associate. See appendices.

⁶³ 27 May 1921 vol.142, col.471-552 (489) INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONFERENCE (CONVENTIONS). < http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1921/may/27/international-labour-conference#column_471 >

⁶⁴ TNA FO 608/238/437, 9.4.19

Barnes accused the Government of betraying its own mission in setting up an International Labour Commission to agree the purpose and powers of the Labour Conference, which all the governments of the world had sanctioned. This egregious denial was dangerous, Barnes said, as the Third International had received a strong show of support at a recent London worker's conference, and he declared: -

If the Government make it a dead letter, and if they show by their action or inaction that they are concerned only with labour problems when there is a dispute, they will play right into the hands of those who do not want co-operation or goodwill, but who do want anarchy.⁶⁵

The threat implied was downplayed by Arthur Henderson, who nevertheless delivered a very strong defence of Barnes' motion and further pointed out the Government's exceptional attitude.⁶⁶ There were 'consequences of an international character, consequences of a political character, and consequences of an industrial character... My right hon. Friend (Mr. Barnes) is deserving of the sympathy of all who desire to see the work of the Paris Conference and of the Washington Conference carried to full fruition.'⁶⁷

The significant cross-party support Barnes received that day mirrored the public appetite for signs of progress toward fulfilment of numerous war-time promises to the working classes. Many MPs took up Barnes' points, arguing that the decision to deny House scrutiny contravened the very spirit of the League of Nations. A 'sinister precedent' was being set by the Lloyd George Government,⁶⁸ foreshadowing his ungainly fall from office. The angry debate adjourned on a motion moved by Robert

⁶⁵ 27 May 1921 vol.142, col. 471-552 (475), op cit.

⁶⁶ Macnamara amended Barnes' procedural motion to an economic question about 'existing circumstances' to argue against passing the Eight-Hours Convention, citing Britain's relative economic weakness.

⁶⁷ 27 May 1921 vol.142, col. 471-552 (515), op cit.

⁶⁸ Ibid (511), speech by William Ormsby Gore. Unionist MP for Stafford and member of the British peace delegation; see appendices

Cecil, avoiding a division. The matter was decided on July 1st when the Government had little choice but to present the Conventions or be referred to the League of Nations for its dereliction. Macnamara withdrew his Amendment and Barnes' original Motion was passed, Ayes, 164; Noes, 53. Britain ratified five of the six Conventions the 1919 Labour Conference had passed, omitting the Eight-Hour Day convention, on July 14 1921.⁶⁹ This episode demonstrates further that Barnes, despite failing health, maintained his socialist commitment to defending working class interests, challenging the Government he had backed during the war and had even chosen over the Labour Party he had helped to create: such were the depths of his beliefs.

The relative success of the first international labour conference was belittled by the 1921 British Government when, after investing so much in the ILO's creation in 1919 (not to mention fully funding the Washington Conference with Treasury Funds), it renounced its commitment to the project for world labour by wilfully obstructing the Washington Conventions' scrutiny. In Barnes' eyes this was an insult to the working classes and an embarrassment for the Government he had supported for years. The Hansard records of these debates also indicate numerous contemporaries of Barnes' who remain under-researched. They provide evidence of how essential bipartisanship was to Parliamentary procedure at the time, also indicating that Barnes' rejection of political 'tribalism' was not so unique.

⁶⁹ See ILO website, under 'technical' for 1919:

<<http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:12000:::NO:::>>; key conventions regarding women's and young person's employment, and night working were abrogated or denounced later; only the Unemployment Convention (no 2) stands.

Barnes retires

Barnes resigned from the Cabinet shortly after returning from Washington in January 1920.⁷⁰ His decision was based on ill health, and feeling that he had fulfilled his 1918 pledge to stay ‘till peace was signed and until Labour was given its place in the peace settlement.’⁷¹ It appeared that the Prime Minister wished him to remain in the Cabinet, as three hand-written letters to Lloyd George giving reasons to leave suggest. The first, of January 26, made no mention of illness stating that his 1918 promise had been met, that peace was ‘secure as it is likely to be’, and that the Labour Organisation was launched.⁷² Two days later he restated these points and enclosed the text of his November 23rd 1918 speech announcing that he had left the Labour Party to remain with the coalition. Barnes felt he had already stayed on too long, and truly believed his work was at an end: the role of ‘Minister with pay but without portfolio’ as he saw it was ‘ceasing to be one which could be justified.’ He announced that he had been, and would remain, under medical care for some time, making his continued tenure impossible.⁷³ His final resignation sent from the Brighton seaside declared ‘the time has come for me to resume my place in the ranks.’ With ‘little to do’ and his health concerns he would be ‘greatly relieved’ to have his resignation accepted.⁷⁴ Lloyd George released him on February 4 1920, one year after the Commission began its work in earnest, praising his ‘disinterested patriotism’ in an expression of gratitude for his many contributions, and the success of that ‘magnificent piece of work, the ILO’, which was ‘more attributable to your initiation and wise guidance than to any other living

⁷⁰ TPA LG F/4/3/33, GNB to DLG 29.1.20

⁷¹ *FWWC*, p.276; In Washington he was under medical care.

⁷² TPA LG F/4/3/31, GNB to DLG 26.1.20

⁷³ TPA LG F/4/3/32, GNB to DLG 28.1.20

⁷⁴ TPA LG F/4/3/33, GNB to DLG 29.1.20

man.⁷⁵ There is much to write about the friendship between Lloyd George and Barnes that persisted after his retirement. Suffice it to say that the final two letters from Barnes to his ‘dear old chief’ dated October and November 1938 in The Parliamentary Archive display tremendous warmth as well as signs of advanced illness.⁷⁶ The unfortunate loss of Barnes’ personal papers becomes starkly apparent when considering what this later correspondence could have revealed.

Barnes continued to represent the British Government when he could, attending the 1920 Geneva Conference as a British labour representative at Lloyd George’s invitation. In preparation, he wrote that he hoped for ‘the release of the Labour Party from Bolshevism’ to represent the Party fully once again: the rise of the Third International and the formation of the Communist Party of Great Britain weighed heavily on both men’s minds. Barnes said he would express unapologetically at Geneva world labour’s view that the League of Nations could not ‘function successfully’ if it did not contain every country.⁷⁷ He clearly relished his experience of the 1920 Conference, dedicating eight pages of his memoir to the proceedings.⁷⁸ It appeared that he was invited to deliver a House of Commons address following the King’s Speech in December 1921 after the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty, but he may have been unwell. There is no record of any remarks in Hansard records.⁷⁹

The Harold Butler papers at the ILO Archive in Geneva contain a great deal of revealing correspondence. Barnes attended numerous world labour and League-related conferences across Europe and Scandinavia, and addressed students of labour and

⁷⁵ TPA LG F/4/3/34, DLG to GNB 4.2.20

⁷⁶ TPA LG G/3/1/17, 18; 26.10 and 30.11.1938

⁷⁷ TPA LG F/4/3/35, GNB to DLG 21.10.20

⁷⁸ Barnes, *FWWC*, pp.279-86

⁷⁹ TPA LG F/4/3/38, GNB to DLG 10.12.21

international relations in the nineteen-twenties and mid-nineteen-thirties, health permitting. He would only attend events where he felt his presence made a practical contribution. For example he declined an invitation from Albert Thomas, Director of the ILO in October 1923, to attend the laying of the new ILO building's cornerstone, a highly momentous occasion, despite being urged by Butler to make an appearance. Barnes eschewed the pomp of such high ceremony and declined, feeling his time was better spent in England attending three ILO meetings and continuing to press for ratification of the Washington Hours Convention.⁸⁰ The ILO Archive's Butler-Barnes correspondence showed that another strong bond had formed; in this case out of a mutual interest in reform of labour. The material also offers great insight into how Barnes continued his ILO and League-related work for as long he was physically able.

⁸⁰ ILO XR 25/31 'G N Barnes' file in Harold Butler papers, correspondence between Albert Thomas, Barnes and Butler, 29.9.23 – 13.10.23

7 Summary and conclusions

The primary purpose of this thesis was to explore the significance of George N. Barnes in the process of creating the ILO during the Paris Peace Conference; identifying his contributions and how he resolved the challenges he faced along the way. He guided the successful creation of the International Labour Organisation through the Labour Commission by maintaining principles and beliefs he had held since the nineteenth century and his political awakening into socialism. In practical terms, Barnes' complex War Cabinet role consolidated his work as propagandist, labour conciliator and policy coordinator, ably preparing him for the work and his changing role in Paris. His mission was nearly thwarted at several turns owing to the complexities of the post-war period; a clash of old and new world ideas and priorities that at times seemed irreconcilable, and the limitations to what was feasible to achieve in such a short space of time were apparent, the pressurised environment of the Peace Conference notwithstanding. However, Barnes also used the opportunity the Labour Commission appointment presented to justify and move his particular policy ideas about labour and 'left' politics into the international sphere, laying the groundwork for his post-Cabinet career.

What this project has also shown is that Barnes has been unfairly overlooked in the historiography as a figure significant for studies of the Labour Party and the evolution of its ideas. He represented a convergence of developing concepts about organised labour's place in the pre- and post-war world, and the role of the state in its affairs, from a decidedly British perspective. It is important to realise that, despite his officially leaving the Labour Party in 1918, he was nevertheless the government-appointed representative for British organised labour in Paris with responsibility for ensuring that the Labour Convention was enshrined within the Versailles Peace Treaty,

a responsibility he took most seriously. Barnes was the only Labour Party member to go from being ‘one of the twenty-nine’ that entered Parliament in 1906 to become a Paris plenipotentiary in 1919, making him an important labour movement figure during a paradigm shift in foreign diplomacy as the working class became an integral component of permanent world institutions. His personal trajectory also mirrored the increasingly outward-looking character of the British Labour Party he helped launch but left behind after so much domestic turmoil.

Broadly, the bulk of his Paris struggles emanated from the three-way clash of democracy, sovereignty and constitutionality that the Labour Convention’s experimental provisions exposed. This triangulation exposed underlying national sensitivities as the Allies redrew territorial and economic boundaries. Barnes was wrestling with historical and political ideological divergences and notions about new-versus old-world thinking, all within an unprecedented model of international diplomacy. As both a labour commissioner and plenipotentiary he continually balanced his old world ethics against new world challenges. His transition from nineteenth-century Christian socialist and radical-reformist activist to twentieth-century trade union political labour was part of a natural evolution, as chapter one demonstrated. The ease with which he adjusted to the role of high diplomat was partly down to his thoughtful, relaxed nature, but his deeply rooted communitarianism and drive for unity was the philosophical, guiding ‘glue’ that held his priorities and mission in alignment. Barnes was able to channel the tensions that characterised his public life into flexible, reactive solutions to the problems he encountered in Paris. Having friends in high places undoubtedly helped him through a number of difficulties, helping him carve out a post-political life for himself in the process.

The research underpinning this thesis has shown that a combination of motivations compelled the British, with Barnes in a prominent role, to oversee the process of enshrining Chapter XIII in the Treaty of Versailles. The persistent ‘Whig’ opinion has mainly argued that the purpose of the ILO being established under the League of Nations was to work towards international post-war reconstruction on the principle of sustained universal peace through the adoption of uniform industrial standards among its member countries. The realist argument has primarily contended that it was created largely as a bulwark to Bolshevism and revolutionary influence among the working classes, while more recent critical assessments have observed that the ILO was a means for the British to assert and maintain economic imperialism. David Lloyd George found an invaluable conduit in Barnes, an ally who shared his liberal principles that dated to the *Belle Époque* as well as his loathing of Bolshevism.

Barnes’ innate pragmatism helped him to co-manage his British Empire Delegation and Labour Commission roles, manoeuvring between academics, international diplomats and labour representatives as needed. Balancing the long-held desires of the working class and the left with the reality of the Conference setting was complicated (and at times, personal), but his political awareness allowed him to manage expectations, keeping the Labour Convention from going a step farther than anything the Allied powers might accept. Barnes’ ethical brand of moderate socialism helped him advance working-class ideals onto the international stage to become more institutionalised, and the ‘moralistic’ tone he expressed so clearly with mirrored the ethical principles of Wilson’s fourteen points. Yet the concept of collective security as a peace-keeping tool was arguably too ‘socialistic’ for some American individualists as the Lodge campaign and the Treaty’s fate demonstrated.

Chapter one of the thesis established the early evolution of Barnes from national to international figure, denoting that his greatest *bête noirs* were disunity and discord; in the Labour Party, between labourers and employers, and in society at large. The biographical review chronicled how Barnes transformed from agitator to establishment figure but remained beholden to a particular non-dogmatic strain of socialism firmly rooted in Christian communitarianism, universal principles that underpinned his transition to world labour figure. Arguably, some of the problems Labour had in the decades to come may have stemmed from the formal adoption by the LRC of the concept of the Party as a broad church, for which Barnes was partially responsible. His entry into Parliament was a natural transition driven by a sense of duty to his community and a utilitarian, scientific yet humanistic moral imperative to help those who could least help themselves. At the same time he wanted to keep the worker from being reduced into a purely materialistic entity whose existence revolved around his economic value. Barnes continually emphasised the importance of keeping warmth and humanity at the centre of policy, as his 1909 ILP publications showed. It is interesting to note that Barnes' 1909 interpretation of Karl Marx presaged the Frankfurt School's tenet that the elimination of the human element from the interpretation of Marx and Engel's philosophies was responsible for capitalism's cruel domination of bourgeois society.¹

Admittedly, one of the aims of this thesis was to debunk some of the left-inspired mythology surrounding Barnes' legacy as 'hard right Labour' or a war hawk. The war called into question the progressive spirit which animated the transition from New Liberal to Labour, and few were spared transformation through its horror. After

¹ See chapters on Horkheimer, Adorno, and Marcuse, et al., in Wiggershaus, *The Frankfurt School: Its History, Theories, and Political Significance* (USA: 1995 MIT Press), or in Tar, *The Frankfurt School: The Critical Theories of Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno* (USA: 1977 Wiley& Sons)

leaving the ILP in 1914 over its pacifist stance, Barnes was in virtual lock-step with the bulk of Labour Party policies and thinking about a thorough prosecution of the war, at least until 1917 when the annual Labour Party Conference resolved for a negotiated peace (Barnes deeply believed that an absolute termination of the German leadership's hostility was only possible through an irrefutable Allied victory). After replacing Henderson in the War Cabinet, he nevertheless supported the Party Conference decision, personally intervening to assure Labour Party members' travel arrangements to independent international socialist and worker's conferences abroad. His belief in constitutional processes was explicit, even if he did not always agree with the outcome. To that end, he also successfully argued before the Imperial War Cabinet that the Peace Conference must pay heed to the decisions of 'unofficial' conferences concerning the Paris labour decisions. The war did not alter his ideological trajectory, but made him (along with the Party and the left) more anxious for practical industrial reforms to become embedded into official Government policy, reaffirming his belief that 'the sport of chance conferences' could never compensate the class who had sacrificed so much for so long.

It is interesting to note that Henderson's attempt to 'serve two masters', the Labour Party and the Government, ultimately led to the revision of the Labour Party machine and manifesto under his oversight, while Barnes' attempt led him toward the Peace Conference. Barnes could rightly be accused of a fair amount of political opportunism for standing beside Lloyd George, 'the man who won the war', in part because he wanted so strongly to represent organised labour in Paris. His mantra of 'country before party' angered the Party left, but it was necessary to ensure this vital relationship remain intact, not to mention it encapsulated all that he held dear about the

wholly inclusive aspect of communitarian socialism. Barnes used Bolshevism as a metaphor for disunity and divisiveness in his propaganda, raising its spectre to consolidate popular support for his policies. Yet he sympathised with the impetus for radicalisation, and took responsibility for communicating the desires of Trade Union militants (who he felt posed a threat despite being in the minority) to the Ministry of Labour and his superiors in government. Barnes had been committed to labour's Parliamentary representation since the ILP's formation (when he was still comparatively 'radical' himself), so it was only natural that he stayed with the Coalition Government after the 1918 general election to 'use his status to press for international machinery to promote the rights of working people' as Alastair Reid put it² once Labour was in opposition. When Barnes was announced as British labour's Paris representative (to the rank and file's chagrin), he redoubled the public effort to convince the masses that electoral pledges to labour would be carried out. He remained an essential conduit between the Labour Party and the Government through official and unofficial channels and despite the media spectacle of the November 1918 split, his working relationship with Arthur Henderson endured.

The risks Barnes took with the Foreign Office in 1917 and the Imperial War Cabinet in 1918 to ensure unofficial voices would be represented in the peace process were proactive responses to social and political change he had witnessed, at home and abroad. Barnes' hand in the preliminary drafting of the British scheme was sometimes apparent and at other times diffuse. He chose not to take credit for its specific features, deferring to it as a group effort at all times. Examination of the evidence and the testimonies of some of his contemporaries suggests his direct involvement in drafting

² Alastair J. Reid, *Barnes, George Nicoll (1859–1940), trade unionist and politician*, ODNB online @ <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/30602?docPos=1>> accessed 4.2.17

some of the Labour Convention's key features. Harold Butler's 17-page memo has been credited as the root of the initial draft, but a careful review of Barnes' activity indicated that he may have been coy about his influence during its creation. His public addresses since 1917 had pre-announced the technical, practical aspects of the scheme as well as its higher aims. Barnes was a strong supporter of the Co-operative movement, and the earliest Convention drafts incorporated its tri-partite, quasi-corporatist nature in its proposed arrangements for the Labour Conference. The ILO's first director in 1920, Albert Thomas, has been credited for the ILO's interest in co-operatism because he was closely involved with the French co-operative movement.³ While these ideas had been taking shape for some time, the earlier link to Barnes is compelling. Further similarities between Barnes' ideology and the shaping of the Labour Conference could be seen in the machinery it devised to give the worker a sense of control over his fate, just as the Workshop Committees and Whitley report encouraged. This was also emphasised in the report Barnes wrote summarising the Unrest Commission's findings. Ideas about co-operatism were not at all exclusive to Barnes, but he was long representative of that school of thought and wove these principles consistently into his policies.

This thesis also delineated Barnes' talent for harmonising seemingly loose ends and disjointed ideas into coherence, a skill that ultimately granted him virtual free rein from his most powerful ally, David Lloyd George. His handling of the joint TUC-BED meetings foreshadowed his ability to manage the full Labour Commission, and the presumption that he, and not Gompers, would lead the Commission was perhaps due to his adept management of the process to that point. The left criticised Barnes for 'hijacking' Labour representatives en route to Berne in January 1919: however the

³ International Labour Organization, 'The ILO and cooperatives: A brief history (1920s–1980s)' in *The Story of the ILO's Promotion of Cooperatives Recommendation, 2002 (No.193)* (Geneva: 2015 ILO), p.3

Labour delegation willingly hustled to arrive virtually overnight in Paris, indicating another area of mutual commitment that has been understated in the historiography. Bringing Labour Party leaders and the TUC PLP directly into the nascent British draft discussions was important to Barnes but, as Bowerman pointed out later, some of the Labour Party's proposals for greater industrial democracy were subjugated to those of the Dominion leaders. By contrast, the Dominion heads' priorities centred on pre-war notions of economic primacy and legislative sovereignty underscored by their drive for independent recognition. The Labour Convention aimed to embrace modernity by embedding the working classes' rights and role into governmental institutions, but the Dominions' insistence upon the economic 'return to normalcy' and their own nationalism presented a conflict. In this way, Barnes' dual role as a Labour Commission representative and member of the British Empire Delegation embodied conflicting priorities as the new world struggled to transcend the old after the war.

A review of Samuel Gompers' life and political ideology helped to better understand why the American labour delegation was such a source of frustration during the Labour Convention process. Gompers found himself in Paris at seventy years of age, confronted with old ideas he distrusted and new ideas he feared. Although rooted in similar soil, the divergence between Barnes' and Gompers' 'socialistic' belief systems was based upon political and historical realities in their native lands. Gompers had recently experienced first-hand the political British Labour Party's links to the international socialist movement in 1918, when renewed efforts to create a political working class party in America threatened everything the AFL stood for. By contrast, Barnes (and the bulk of the European delegates) had an increasingly benevolent experience of working with the State and within government; Labour's entry into

Parliament in 1906 proved to him that a vigilant working class only stood to benefit from this relationship.

In retrospect, the critical junctures along Barnes' path are not difficult to trace through mass industrialisation and the 'machine question', hastened by the effect of the wartime Munitions Act on the trade unions and through the radicalisation of the shop steward movement. The ILO could not exist until pre-war notions of national sovereignty were sacrificed to some degree in the name of industrial and world peace, and Barnes' early insistence on the need for a League of Nations and collective security expressed this belief. His conviction that equity of industrial standards was essential to keep Britain leading Empire in order to restore healthy international trade flows was economically sound, but also representative of contemporary 'imperialist' opinion: an Imperialism that was also exhibited by Gompers who refused to jeopardise America's high-wage economy and the primacy accorded to production for the sake of the Labour Conference. The Labour Commission was in essence a battleground for the nations involved to maintain and/or establish a foothold in the hierarchy of the emerging post-war world economy, and reap the rewards of any soft power that came with it.

Barnes 'Britishness' was explicit. He championed the fact that the British scheme and its 2:1:1 Conference vote composition had been sanctioned by British labour, and that as their agent he ensured that this would remain intact. He did not, however, reveal that Lloyd George was adamant that the State must maintain its two conference votes, and it is important to remember that Barnes' relative independence on the Commission been ordained by the Prime Minister with that caveat. McKillen observed that Gompers was not under similar guidance from President Wilson. Wilson chose to step back from directly influencing 'the common people of the world' out of

fear, believing that such matters be left to the international labour conference to determine.⁴ Any change-of-heart Gompers displayed regarding the British-led Commission was sporadic depending on his immediate requirements. He championed the Labour Commission when he needed to show support for Wilson's League vision, but was a foe when it came to the Conference vote and Article XIX. Once he got what he wanted regarding the latter, he commended the Commission's work. Gompers used Furuseth as a wedge to attain certain concessions, but Furuseth's satisfaction was temporary and he was soon on the attack again. This put Gompers in the strange position of defending the Labour Commission's work during the June 1920 AFL Conference after denigrating it earlier. From 1921 to 1924 Gompers returned to chastising the Commission publicly for being unsympathetic to his demands, simultaneously upholding the ILO as evidence of his commitment to elevating the world's workers. America's tradition of isolationism greatly impacted the Labour Commission sittings, and Gompers' eloquences about uplifting the world's workers were undercut once it appeared that he and his colleague Robinson were primarily concerned with protecting their high-wage economy, and not making overtures towards universal social progress. It would be short-sighted, however, to ignore the fact that the British were equally concerned with protecting their own economic primacy through the ILO scheme, as Barnes often admitted.

It was apparent that the Labour Convention would never pass the Peace Conference without the Americans delegation's consent, but in the end, Congress never ratified the Treaty of Versailles nor did it join the League of Nations. In this way, this thesis observes a facet of the unequal US-UK 'special relationship' after the first world

⁴ McKillen, p.196

war, exposing how far Barnes was willing to go to keep America a partner in global policy decisions while excusing them from any real responsibility. Despite these and other ironies that underpinned the Anglo-American relationship during and after the ILO's inception, Barnes exercised the utmost diplomacy towards Gompers and held him in high esteem.

The British labour delegation wisely focused on European and Japanese support for the Labour Convention in the face of American resistance which helped smooth its passage. Labour matters at the war's end were inextricably tied into matters of high diplomacy, as shown through the deal-making between Barnes, Sir Malcolm and the Italians, and by Lloyd George's dependence on Barnes for information on how the Italian working classes might respond to settlement decisions. Barnes also asserted that making the ILO scheme flexible enough to accommodate developing economies like Japan and India was vital for a virtuous economic cycle as well as intrinsic to the success and democracy of the Conference. It is speculative to presume that support for 'backwards' nations might have been used as propaganda to minimise criticisms that the British labour scheme was just another Imperialist diktat, but given negative contemporary press about the Peace Conference one should not entirely rule that out.⁵ Barnes personally (and presciently) believed it was important to quickly return Germany to the world economy by easing its schedule for financial reparations, a view popular with contemporary economists among others, but not with the Allied powers.

Informal gatherings, chance meetings, and unofficial sub-committees constituting 'hallway diplomacy' in Paris affected Barnes and the Labour Convention to a varying extent. For example, there is no telling what Barnes, Henderson and Lansbury

⁵ TNA series FO 608/239 holds a great deal of left press criticism from *The Labour Leader*, *Forward!*, the *Herald*, *The Call*, *Justice*, and *The Workers' Dreadnought*, et al.

discussed in January 1919 without any records, so the outcome from their meetings is speculative. Shotwell's documentation of random encounters with Furuseth show that he was somewhat prepared for the 'deal' the two eventually made over point fifteen, and the resulting protocol to Article XIX became one of the most contentious aspects of the Convention. Also, Phelan may have testified that his rousing the Czech and Polish delegates from slumber prevented 2:1:1's defeat, but one must also consider how gravely they considered the importance of siding with the British when they were at their zenith of global power.

The Labour Commission did not receive the women's delegation before the Inter-Allied Women's Conference (IWC) persuaded President Wilson to allow women to attend some Peace Conference committees, showing how change in this area was indeed slow coming. This was indicative of the holdover nineteenth-century attitude Barnes held regarding women's suffrage: he believed that women's matters 'distracted' Labour MPs from more pressing priorities. The two Bondfield amendments marginally influenced the Convention, indicating little more than a gradually changing attitude towards women's participation in permanent institutions. As noted by Eisenberg, the ILO Convention was both more and less progressive than the League Covenant towards women: it was progressive because Article 389 of the Treaty's Labour Chapter determined that women's questions required a woman adviser (one of two in total), but less so because, unlike Article 7 of the League covenant determining all of its posts were equally open to men or women, Article 395 of Chapter XIII stated that only 'a certain number of [the employees in the ILO secretariat] shall be women.'

The British Dominion leaders' declarations of independence introduced a new dimension to Barnes' post-Commission challenges, but his years of service to Lloyd

George were repaid when he needed it most. The Prime Minister pulled no punches with the resistant Dominion heads, making it clear that their weak economic arguments would not hold up the Labour Convention's passage. Also, Balfour stepped in to refer Barnes and the Labour Report up to the 'Big Four' when he encountered friction from the Council of Five. While this might have seemed like an act of divine intervention, Balfour was undoubtedly concerned with preventing a British humiliation should the Peace Conference kill the Labour Convention after it had received so much publicity. These interventions demonstrated the importance of protecting Britain's interests, and once again Barnes benefitted from his political affiliations. Any earlier schism between Balfour and Barnes (e.g., over his role with The League to Abolish War, or speaking on Germany as if he represented Government opinion) was trumped by the importance of the ILO's success for all of the reasons outlined above.

The final epilogue chapter reviewed some aspects of Barnes' post-Labour Commission role in an abridged manner, indicating further research and questions to answer. Why was Barnes so involved with Canadian delegation problems? Had he been tasked by the Prime Minister to intervene as a BED member, or did he personally take this on as part of his extended Labour Commission remit? Did the Prime Minister know, or care, that Barnes was aiding the supposedly non-political Organising Committee for the Washington Conference its decision-making during the exchange of the German notes? Did Barnes step in to help draft the British response to the German delegation owing to his personal interest in Germany's civilian population? Barnes' prolonged triangulation over the matter of Germany's Washington Conference attendance, its position on the ILO Governing Body, and his involvement with the IFTU after its August Amsterdam declaration could fill many pages. For example, Barnes was

appointed Ambassador to Berlin in July, 1919, reportedly ‘in recognition of the fact that he was the chief actor in securing the inclusion of the International Labour Charter in the Peace Treaty.’⁶ It is hoped that a fuller review of these records will produce a complete survey of Barnes’ role in British-German relations before, during and after the war. As a Washington Conference Chairman, how and to what extent did his influence affect the daily proceedings? Records of sub-committee meetings or witness testimonies involving Barnes may enrich the Washington Conference story beyond what is already known. Research for this thesis has also concluded that details of his post-1920 years, after he left the Coalition, have rarely been discussed. For example, correspondence with Harold Butler when he was at the ILO (from 1920 as Assistant Director and from 1932 as Director) reveals a great deal about the continuing relationship between Britain and the permanent labour institution Barnes helped establish.

Analysis of the Labour Commission sessions indicated how the completed draft Labour Convention, finally agreed through virtual consensus (save Japan’s abstention and an oft-absent French delegate), represented a patchwork of contemporary national and philosophical influences, some complementary and some competitive, each faction and delegation striving to make a crucial impact upon the permanent organisation for labour under construction that reflected their wider outlooks. The ceaseless struggle for women to have their voices heard and requirements acknowledged was overt. The Labour Commission records also captured, for example, British primacy after ‘winning’ the war, the American tradition of independence (and isolationism), while France’s motto of *liberté, égalité, fraternité* was ably characterised by Leon Jouhaux when

⁶ *Argus*, Melbourne (Australia), 4.7.19, p. 7

defending the more ‘democratic’, single conference vote particularly.⁷ Belgium essentially tried to balance its need to rebuild with the imperative of advancing progressive labour reform, while Japanese and Indian uncertainty about their position in the new labour (and world) order was explicit until the last, and the British Dominions (including India) seized the opportunity to test the limits of their sovereignty and national identity. The Czechs and the Italians both made a point of stressing the importance of their proletariat to the world economy, and of their nations when it came to re-drawing geopolitical boundaries in the wake of German hostilities and occupation. In this way a clearer picture begins to emerge of how national complexions and outlook shaped that most vital aspect of the Peace Treaty which endured through the establishment of the permanent International Labour Organisation. Peace through labour was resilient when compared with the unfortunate longer-term fates of the Treaty of Versailles and the League of Nations.

Barnes said the Labour Chapter in the Peace Treaty was ‘the work of many minds from many countries but in its inception and main outlines it was British... My job had been to pilot it through with the greatest possible measure of agreement and good will.’⁸ He was but one among many voices espousing the need for and the virtues of raising industrial standards for the global working class through institutional channels in the name of peace, and was able to use his ‘accidental’ position (as he called it) to achieve this. Barnes’ language and approach was symptomatic of the paradigm shift towards the ‘new internationalism’ of the immediate post-war era, but it was rooted in communitarian socialism’s collectivist ethos and a decidedly British mindset. His mild

⁷ Jouhaux declared during the March 20 Commission sessions that 2:1:1 stood ‘in profound opposition to the traditions of the policy of the French people’ from the typed English translation of the CGT *Statement on International Labour Conference*, ILO 4.06 LC.15 (undated but c. March 1919)

⁸ Barnes, *FWWC*, p.252; attributed to the joint discussions of Sir Malcolm, Butler, Phelan and Barnes per Shotwell’s interview(s) with Phelan c. 1931

nationalism, high visibility and consistent use of anti-Bolshevist messaging helped secure moderate, majority support for the idea that the moderately socialist British Labour Party could sit comfortably within the centres of power. By standing alongside Lloyd George and Woodrow Wilson, Barnes' presence on the international stage formed a link between British labour and responsible government in the eyes of Western establishment figures. But he didn't 'swing to the right' so much as stay true to what he had believed since his nineteenth century political awakenings about working class representation through constitutional structures inside permanent institutions.

Competing tensions defined Barnes' public life, but he amalgamated the conflicts that defined his domestic career into a syncretist doctrine that allowed him to meet the unprecedented challenges of the Peace Conference and build the bridge that carried him into the international labour realm. His personal policies embodied the ethos of emergent post-war internationalism based on shared interests and commonalities rather than territorial disputes and power-mongering, yet they maintained an intrinsically British emphasis. He was able to overcome some of the paradoxes underlying the International Labour Organisation's creation during some crucial junctures through his desire for conciliation and his position at the centre of a powerful network. Barnes' witnessed and in many ways represented a transition of ideological and political thoughts and practices, from the domestic to the international, at an important time in organised labour's history. At times he stumbled, but his essential and important efforts towards the creation of the International Labour Organisation in 1919, and what this represented in terms of geopolitical history, have been greatly underestimated. For the reasons outlined, the work of George N. Barnes deserves greater attention in British Labour Party historiography, and in histories of the

international working class movement, international relations, and the development of international ideas during the early twentieth century.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Excerpts from Barnes' biographical pamphlets

They were noteworthy for denoting Barnes' particular eloquence, and the tenderness he displayed toward his subjects.

Henry George

According to Barnes, Henry George: -

...proposed to tax land values to extinction, or till economic rent was swallowed up, excepting only such as amount as would compensate landlords for collecting, and he argued that thereby industry would be freed from taxes, wages increased, poverty abolished, and a state of society brought about from which would emerge a free people, controlling affairs on lines of free and voluntary co-operation...¹

He was characterised as being: -

...Gifted with wonderful power as a writer, and favoured by circumstances in getting the ear of the English-speaking peoples, it is probable that he, of modern writers, did more to stimulate thought on social matters than all others put together. But his services to the people were not limited by his writings. He threw himself with ardour into practical affairs, and as an agitator... contributed to the formation of public opinion against landlordism and monopoly.²

...Whether freedom will come by his methods or by those of others is a matter which does not concern me here. But of the man it can with confidence be said that he fought bravely for the truth as he saw it, and, better still, the he loved his kind and served them with all his might.³

The portrayal of George's final hours took on near-holy reverence: -

...In the night he got up and... was found in an adjoining room, standing erect with his eyes wide open... fixed ahead as if he saw something. Perhaps he did; who knows? It is never given to the pioneer to enter into the Promised Land, but, maybe like Moses, he got a glimpse of it as he crossed the bar. He never spoke again, and, in a few minutes, he was dead. What the world knew as Henry George had left the flesh.⁴

¹ Barnes, *Henry George*, p.1

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., p.20

⁴ Ibid.

Robert Burns

The following is all Barnes' writing, the indented text are his quotations from Burns.

He anticipated economic thought by a hundred years, although, like Morris,⁵ he probably never read a text-book of economics in his life. It was perhaps fortunate for the economists that he hadn't, for if he had turned on them the same lash which was directed against the canting religious bigotry of his day, they would certainly have cut as sorry a figure as Holy Willie himself.⁶ Unlike them, he knew that the object of true political economy was not the accumulation of wealth, but rather the rearing of happy-hearted human beings; hence he pilloried oppression, and brought social wrong vividly into view...

...The dirge in which he pictured the "Poor o'er laboured wight, So abject, mean and vile" Is just as applicable to the grim spectre of the unemployed man today as it was then, although the poem from which the words are culled seems to be somewhat of an unreal production, the outcome, probably of a fit of melancholy.⁷

...If I'm designed yon lordling's slave,
By nature's law designed,
Why was an independent wish
E'er planted in my mind?⁸

His message is, of course, tacitly dismissed by the worldly wise as a mere dream, but it is the dream which keeps the world young and green and hopeful. It is the dream which inspires those who do battle for the right; it is the dream which shall possess the best of mankind while injustice lasts, and until the dawn of the better day when war shall be no more, and -

Man to man the world o'er
Shall brithers be, and a that.⁹

Karl Marx

Barnes drew comparisons between Marx and Henry George: -

Like Henry George, Karl Marx was a man of the world, as well as a man of books. He was also, like the Prophet of San Francisco, a man of great human sympathies, as well as of intellectual attainments...

⁵ Barnes referred to William Morris, (1834–1896), see bibliographic table.

⁶ 'Holy Willie's Prayer' was another poem by Burns wherein the title character was an elder in the church parish of Mauchline, in Ayrshire, names Willie Fisher; Fisher was a hypocritical figure who spied upon others in his community and reported to the Minister their 'sinful' wrong-doings.

⁷ Barnes, *Robert Burns*, p.12; Burns was prone to fits of debilitating depression.

⁸ Excerpt from 'Man Was Made To Mourn: A Dirge' (1784)

⁹ *Robert Burns*, op cit., p.12

As a profound thinker and a man of erudition probably justice can scarcely yet be done him... but it is as a man and a leader of men that Marx is mainly of interest to us here. And it may at once be said that, like all truly great men, although he led a tempestuous life, he yet remained one of the most genial and most general of souls.¹⁰

Barnes' interpretation of the *Communist Manifesto* (1848) read in part:

Emancipation lay in the property-less classes getting and using political power as a lever to transfer the means of life from the owning classes to a State representing and acting on behalf of all the people. He pointed out that this did not mean subversion of existing principles, but their universalization... It meant abolishing, not the State, but only the State as run by and in the interests of a small class.¹¹

Robert Owen

Per Barnes, Robert Owen: -

...attached supreme importance to education and co-operation, ...(which) covered a very wide field... he envisaged co-operation in all the ordinary social and secular things of life, and not merely co-operation in selling things over a counter. The keynote of his teaching was co-operation of educated citizens for the common good. And his supreme credit was that he lived in line with his faith.

...New Lanark was with Owen only a beginning, and not an end. He wanted to transform the whole world and rid it of its evils. Poverty – mental, moral, or material – he regarded as the result of bad surroundings... This really summed up his philosophy and his economics. Improve material surroundings, and a new race would arise.¹²

Barnes concluded his speech on Owen's parting in his reverent style:-

...he rallied for a day or two. He even discussed with the local vicar some proposed alterations in the village school. It was only the last flicker of a departing spirit which his feeble body could not sustain. He breathed his last ere many more hours, consistent to the last, for he had worked while he had any strength left... He never saw the promised land, but he was happy in having found the road. Nor was it a new road, for it is found in the injunction, now nearly 2,000 years old, 'he that is greatest among you let him be the servant of all'. Robert Owen was the servant of all!^{13,14}

¹⁰ Barnes, *Karl Marx*, p.1

¹¹ Ibid, pp.7-8

¹² Barnes, *Robert Owen*, pp.10-11

¹³ Ibid, p.18

¹⁴ Barnes seemed to have combined elements from the King James Bible: Matthew 23:11 'But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant', and Mark 9:35 'Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all.'

Appendix 2: *Draft Convention Crating a Permanent Organisation for the Promotion of International Regulation of Labor Conditions, Prepared by the British Delegation, January 21, 1919*

The earliest ‘treaty’ form of the British draft scheme (sans Preamble).

1. The High Contracting Parties agree to accept as the basis of a permanent organisation for the promotion of the objects set forth in the preamble, the provisions contained in the following articles.

or

1. The High Contracting Parties constitute themselves a Union for the promotion of the objects set forth in the preamble. For this purpose they agree to accept as the basis of a permanent organisation the provisions contained in the following articles –

2. A general Conference of representatives of the High Contracting Parties shall be held within six months of the date when the present Convention comes into force, and similar Conferences shall be held from time to time as occasion may require, and in any case at intervals of not more than one year. The meetings of the general Conference are referred to in the present Convention as the Annual Conference.

3. The Annual Conference shall be composed of three representatives of each of the High Contracting Parties, of whom one shall be the delegate of the Government and the others shall be delegates representing the employers and the workpeople, of each of the High Contracting Parties.

The High Contracting Parties undertake to select the non-government delegates in agreement, so far as may be possible, with whatever organisation of employers and workpeople may exist in their countries.

The names of the delegates to meetings of the Annual Conference will be communicated to the International Bureau hereafter provided for by the government of each of the High Contracting Parties.

The credentials of delegates to the Annual Conference shall be subject to scrutiny by the Conference which may by the vote of two-thirds of the delegates present, refuse to admit any delegate whom it deems not to have been selected in accordance with the undertaking contained in this article.

4. The delegates shall vote individually on all matters which are taken into consideration by the Annual Conference.

The Government delegates shall be entitled to two votes each, and the other delegates to one vote.

If, however, for any reason any High Contracting Party fails to send to the Annual Conference one of its non-government delegates whom it is entitles to send, the other of these delegates shall be allowed to sit and speak at the Conference, but not vote.

(If any High Contracting Party sends neither of the non-government delegates whom it is entitled to send, its government delegate shall have two votes and no more.

If, in accordance with Article 3 the Annual Conference refuses admission to a delegate of any High Contracting Party, the provisions of the present article shall apply just as if the High Contracting Party had sent no such delegate.)

5. The meetings of the Annual Conference shall be held at the capital of the League of Nations.

6. There shall be established at the capital of the League of Nations an International Bureau, under the authority and protection of the Chancellor of the League.

The International Bureau shall be under the immediate direction and control of a General Secretary, who shall be the person named in the protocol hereto.

7. The General Secretary shall act as the Secretary of the Annual Conference, and shall be responsible to the Annual Conference for the efficient conduct of the International Bureau and for other such duties as may be assigned to him.

8. The final constitution and functions of the International Bureau shall be finally determined at the first meeting of the Annual Conference.

Its functions shall include the preparation of an Agenda for the meetings of the Annual Conference, the collection of information on all subjects relating to the international adjustment of conditions of employment, the distributions of such information to the Governments of the High Contracting Parties, the conduct of special investigations ordered by the Annual Conference, the carrying out of the duties required of it by the provisions of this Convention in connection with international disputes, the editing and publication of a periodical paper in the French and English languages, dealing with international problems of industry and employment, and shall be responsible for all communications between the International Bureau and the heads of the labour departments of the High Contracting Parties.

9. Each of the High Contracting Parties agrees to establish, if it has not already established one, a special government department dealing with labour questions and the conditions of employment.

The head of this department shall act as the sole and responsible channel of communication between the government of the High Contracting Parties and the General Secretary, and shall be responsible for supplying to the General Secretary the statistics and other information he may require.

10. There shall be established a Council of the International Bureau which shall consist of the heads of the labour departments, or other representatives appointed by the Governments of Great Britain, the United States, France, Italy and Japan.

The Council shall meet from time to time at the capital of the League of Nations, as occasion may require, and shall direct the General Secretary with regard to the preparation of Agenda for the Annual Conference, and with regard to the conduct of the International Bureau, and with regard to any other matter arising out of the Policy adopted by the Annual Conference

11. The Council of the International Bureau, together with the General Secretary, shall be responsible for the summoning and organisation of the first meeting of the Annual Conference.

12. The Council of the International Bureau and the General Secretary shall be entitled to apply to the Chancellor of the League of Nations for any assistance they may require in connection with the organisation of the meetings of the Annual Conference, (or in the conduct of special investigations ordered by the Annual Conference), in the acquisition of buildings required for the International Bureau, or in any other matter in which the Chancellor may be able to assist them.

13. The expenses of the International Bureau shall be borne by the governments of the High Contracting Parties in accordance with the distribution among the members of the Postal Union of the expenses of the International Postal Bureau. The expenses of the meetings of the Annual Conference and of the Council of the International Bureau

shall be borne in equal parts by the governments sending representatives to these meetings.

14. The High Contracting Parties recognise the right of the British Empire to separate representation in respect of the Dominions of the British Empire, including India, at meetings of the Annual Conference, and the right of the Labour Departments of these Dominions and of India to communicate directly with the General Secretary.

Source: *Origins of the International Labor Organization*, volume II, document 30.

Appendix 3: Chapter XIII of the Treaty of Versailles (the ‘Labour Chapter’)

PART XIII. LABOUR

SECTION I.

ORGANISATION OF LABOUR.

Whereas the League of Nations has for its object the establishment of universal peace, and such a peace can be established only if it is based upon social justice;

And whereas conditions of labour exist involving such injustice, hardship, and privation to large numbers of people as to produce unrest so great that the peace and harmony of the world are imperilled; and an improvement of those conditions is urgently required: as, for example, by the regulation of the hours of work, including the establishment of a maximum working day and week, the regulation of the labour supply, the prevention of unemployment, the provision of an adequate living wage, the protection of the worker against sickness, disease and injury arising out of his employment, the protection of children, young persons and women, provision for old age and injury, protection of the interests of workers when employed in countries other than their own recognition of the principle of freedom of association, the organisation of vocational and technical education and other measures;

Whereas also the failure of any nation to adopt humane conditions of labour is an obstacle in the way of other nations which desire to improve the conditions in their own countries;

The HIGH CONTRACTING PARTIES, moved by sentiments of justice and humanity as well as by the desire to secure the permanent peace of the world, agree to the following:

CHAPTER I. ORGANISATION.

ARTICLE 387.

A permanent organisation is hereby established for the promotion of the objects set forth in the Preamble.

The original Members of the League of Nations shall be the original Members of this organisation, and hereafter membership of the League of Nations shall carry with it membership of the said organisation.

ARTICLE 388.

The permanent organisation shall consist of:

A General Conference of Representatives of the Members and,
an International Labour Office controlled by the Governing Body described in Article 393.

ARTICLE 389.

The meetings of the General Conference of Representatives of the Members shall be held from time to time as occasion may require, and at least once in every year. It shall be composed of four Representatives of each of the Members, of whom two shall be Government Delegates and the two others shall be Delegates representing respectively the employers and the workpeople of each of the Members.

Each Delegate may be accompanied by advisers, who shall not exceed two in number for each item on the agenda of the meeting. When questions specially affecting women are to be considered by the Conference, one at least of the advisers should be a woman.

The members undertake to nominate non-Government Delegates and advisers chosen in agreement with the industrial organisations, if such organisations exist, which are most representative of employers or workpeople, as the case may be, in their respective countries.

Advisers shall not speak except on a request made by the Delegate whom they accompany and by the special authorisation of the President of the Conference, and may not vote.

A Delegate may by notice in writing addressed to the President appoint one of his advisers to act as his deputy, and the adviser, while so acting, shall be allowed to speak and vote.

The names of the Delegates and their advisers will be communicated to the International Labour Office by the Government of each of the Members.

The credentials of Delegates and their advisers shall be subject to scrutiny by the Conference, which may, by two-thirds of the votes cast by the Delegates present, refuse to admit any Delegate or adviser whom it deems not to have been nominated in accordance with this Article.

ARTICLE 390.

Every Delegate shall be entitled to vote individually on all matters which are taken into consideration by the Conference.

If one of the Members fails to nominate one of the non-Government Delegates whom it is entitled to nominate, the other non-Government Delegate shall be allowed to sit and speak at the Conference, but not to vote.

If in accordance with Article 389 the Conference refuses admission to a Delegate of one of the Members, the provisions of the present Article shall apply as if that Delegate had not been nominated.

ARTICLE 391.

The meetings of the Conference shall be held at the seat of the League of Nations, or at such other place as may be decided by the Conference at a previous meeting by two-thirds of the votes cast by the Delegates present.

ARTICLE 392.

The International Labour Office shall be established at the seat of the League of Nations as part of the organisation of the League.

ARTICLE 393

The International Labour Office shall be under the control of a Governing Body consisting of twenty-four persons, appointed in accordance with the following provisions:

The Governing Body of the International Labour Office shall be constituted as follows:

Twelve persons representing the Governments;

Six persons elected by the Delegates to the Conference representing the employers;

Six persons elected by the Delegates to the Conference representing the workers.

Of the twelve persons representing the Governments eight shall be nominated by the Members which are of the chief industrial importance, and four shall be nominated by the Members selected for the purpose by the Government Delegates to the Conference, excluding the Delegates of the eight Members mentioned above.

Any question as to which are the Members of the chief industrial importance shall be decided by the Council of the League of Nations.

The period of office of the Members of the Governing Body will be three years. The method of filling vacancies and other similar questions may be determined by the Governing Body subject to the approval of the Conference.

The Governing Body shall, from time to time, elect one of its members to act as its Chairman, shall regulate its own procedure and shall fix its own times of meeting. A special meeting shall be held if a written request to that effect is made by at least ten members of the Governing Body.

ARTICLE 394.

There shall be a Director of the International Labour Office, who shall be appointed by the Governing Body, and, subject to the instructions of the Governing Body, shall be responsible for the efficient conduct of the International Labour Office and for such other duties as may be assigned to him.

The Director or his deputy shall attend all meetings of the Governing Body.

ARTICLE 395.

The staff of the International Labour Office shall be appointed by the Director who shall, so far as is possible with due regard to the efficiency of the work of the Office, select persons of different nationalities A certain number of these persons shall be women.

ARTICLE 396.

The functions of the International Labour Office shall include the collection and distribution of information on all subjects relating to the international adjustment of conditions of industrial life and labour, and particularly the examination of subjects which it is proposed to bring before the Conference with a view to the conclusion of international conventions, and the conduct of such special investigations as may be ordered by the Conference.

It will prepare the agenda for the meetings of the Conference.

It will carry out the duties required of it by the provisions of this Part of the present Treaty in connection with international disputes.

It will edit and publish in French and English, and in such other languages as the Governing Body may think desirable, a periodical paper dealing with problems of industry and employment of international interest.

Generally, in addition to the functions set out in this Article, it shall have such other powers and duties as may be assigned to it by the Conference.

ARTICLE 397.

The Government Departments of any of the Members which deal with questions of industry and employment may communicate directly with the Director through the Representative of their Government on the Governing Body of the International Labour Office, or failing any such Representative, through such other qualified official as the Government may nominate for the purpose.

ARTICLE 398.

The International Labour Office shall be entitled to the assistance of the Secretary-General of the League of Nations in any matter in which it can be given.

ARTICLE 399.

Each of the Members will pay the travelling and subsistence expenses of its Delegates and their advisers and of its Representatives attending the meetings of the Conference or Governing Body, as the case may be.

All the other expenses of the International Labour Office and of the meetings of the Conference or Governing Body shall be paid to the Director by the Secretary-General of the League of Nations out of the general funds of the League.

The Director shall be responsible to the Secretary-General of the League for the proper expenditure of all moneys paid to him in pursuance of this Article.

CHAPTER II.
PROCEDURE.

ARTICLE 400.

The agenda for all meetings of the Conference will be settled by the Governing Body, who shall consider any suggestion as to the agenda that may be made by the

Government of any of the Members or by any representative organisation recognised for the purpose of Article 389.

ARTICLE 401.

The Director shall act as the Secretary of the Conference, and shall transmit the agenda so as to reach the Members four months before the meeting of the Conference, and, through them, the non-Government Delegates when appointed.

ARTICLE 402.

Any of the Governments of the Members may formally object to the inclusion of any item or items in the agenda. The grounds for such objection shall be set forth in a reasoned statement addressed to the Director, who shall circulate it to all the Members of the Permanent Organisation.

Items to which such objection has been made shall not, however, be excluded from the agenda, if at the Conference a majority of two-thirds of the votes cast by the Delegates present is in favour of considering them.

If the Conference decides (otherwise than under the preceding paragraph) by two-thirds of the votes cast by the Delegates present that any subject shall be considered by the Conference, that subject shall be included in the agenda for the following meeting.

ARTICLE 403.

The Conference shall regulate its own procedure, shall elect its own President, and may appoint committees to consider and report on any matter.

Except as otherwise expressly provided in this Part of the present Treaty, all matters shall be decided by a simple majority of the votes cast by the Delegates present.

The voting is void unless the total number of votes cast is equal to half the number of the Delegates attending the Conference.

ARTICLE 404.

The Conference may add to any committees which it appoints technical experts, who shall be assessors without power to vote.

ARTICLE 405.

When the Conference has decided on the adoption of proposals with regard to an item in the agenda, it will rest with the Conference to determine whether these proposals should take the form: (a) of a recommendation to be submitted to the Members for consideration with a view to effect being given to it by national legislation or otherwise, or (b) of a draft international convention for ratification by the Members.

In either case a majority of two-thirds of the votes cast by the Delegates present shall be necessary on the final vote for the adoption of the recommendation or draft convention, as the case may be, by the Conference.

In framing any recommendation or draft convention of general application the Conference shall have due regard to those countries in which climatic conditions, the

imperfect development of industrial organisation or other special circumstances make the industrial conditions substantially different and shall suggest the modifications, if any, which it considers may be required to meet the case of such countries.

A copy of the recommendation or draft convention shall be authenticated by the signature of the President of the Conference and of the Director and shall be deposited with the Secretary-General of the League of Nations. The Secretary-General will communicate a certified copy of the recommendation or draft convention to each of the members.

Each of the Members undertakes that it will, within the period of one year at most from the closing of the session of the Conference, or if it is impossible owing to exceptional circumstances to do so within the period of one year, then at the earliest practicable moment and in no case later than eighteen months from the closing of the session of the Conference, bring the recommendation or draft convention before the authority or authorities within whose competence the matter lies, for the enactment of legislation or other action.

In the case of a recommendation, the Members will inform the Secretary-General of the action taken.

In the case of a draft convention, the Member will, if it obtains the consent of the authority or authorities within whose competence the matter lies, communicate the formal ratification of the convention to the Secretary-General and will take such action as may be necessary to make effective the provisions of such convention.

If on a recommendation no legislative or other action is taken to make a recommendation effective, or if the draft convention fails to obtain the consent of the authority or authorities within whose competence the matter lies, no further obligation shall rest upon the Member.

In the case of a federal State, the power of which to enter into conventions on labour matters is subject to limitations, it shall be in the discretion of that Government to treat a draft convention to which such limitations apply as a recommendation only, and the provisions of this Article with respect to recommendations shall apply in such case.

The above Article shall be interpreted in accordance with the following principle:

In no case shall any Member be asked or required, as a result of the adoption of any recommendation or draft convention by the Conference, to lessen the protection afforded by its existing legislation to the workers concerned.

ARTICLE 406.

Any convention so ratified shall be registered by the Secretary-General of the League of Nations, but shall only be binding upon the Members which ratify it.

ARTICLE 407.

If any convention coming before the Conference for final consideration fails to secure the support of two-thirds of the votes cast by the Delegates present, it shall nevertheless

be within the right of any of the Members of the Permanent Organisation to agree to such convention among themselves.

Any convention so agreed to shall be communicated by the Governments concerned to the Secretary-General of the League of Nations, who shall register it.

ARTICLE 408.

Each of the Members agrees to make an annual report to the International Labour Office on the measures which it has taken to give effect to the provisions of conventions to which it is a party. These reports shall be made in such form and shall contain such particulars as the Governing Body may request. The Director shall lay a summary of these reports before the next meeting of the Conference.

ARTICLE 409.

In the event of any representation being made to the International Labour Office by an industrial association of employers or of workers that any of the members has failed to secure in any respect the effective observance within its jurisdiction of any convention to which it is a party, the Governing Body may communicate this representation to the Government against which it is made and may invite that Government to make such statement on the subject as it may think fit.

ARTICLE 410.

If no statement is received within a reasonable time from the Government in question, or if the statement when received is not deemed to be satisfactory by the Governing Body, the latter shall have the right to publish the representation and the statement, if any, made in reply to it.

ARTICLE 411.

Any of the Members shall have the right to file a complaint with the International Labour Office if it is not satisfied that any other Member is securing the effective observance of any convention which both have ratified in accordance with the foregoing Articles.

The Governing Body may, if it thinks fit, before referring such a complaint to a Commission of Enquiry, as hereinafter provided for, communicate with the Government in question in the manner described in Article 409.

If the Governing Body does not think it necessary to communicate the complaint to the Government in question, or if, when they have made such communication, no statement in reply has been received within a reasonable time which the Governing Body considers to be satisfactory, the Governing Body may apply for the appointment of a Commission of Enquiry to consider the complaint and to report thereon.

The Governing Body may adopt the same procedure either of its own motion or on receipt of a complaint from a Delegate to the Conference.

When any matter arising out of Articles 410 or 411 is being considered by the Governing Body, the Government in question shall, if not already represented thereon, be entitled to send a representative to take part in the proceedings of the Governing

Body while the matter is under consideration. Adequate notice of the date on which the matter will be considered shall be given to the Government in question.

ARTICLE 412.

The Commission of Enquiry shall be constituted in accordance with the following provisions:

Each of the Members agrees to nominate within six months of the date on which the present Treaty comes into force three persons of industrial experience, of whom one shall be a representative of employers, one a representative of workers, and one a person of independent standing, who shall together form a panel from which the Members of the Commission of Enquiry shall be drawn.

The qualifications of the persons so nominated shall be subject to scrutiny by the Governing Body, which may be two-thirds of the votes cast by the representatives present refuse to accept the nomination of any person whose qualifications do not in its Opinion comply with the requirements of the present Article.

Upon the application of the Governing Body, the Secretary-General of the League of Nations shall nominate three persons one from each section of this panel, to constitute the Commission of Enquiry, and shall designate one of them as the President of the Commission. None of these three persons shall be a person nominated to the panel by any Member directly concerned in the complaint.

ARTICLE: 413.

The Members agree that, in the event of the reference of a complaint to a Commission of Enquiry under Article 411, they will each, whether directly concerned in the complaint or not, place at the disposal of the Commission all the information in their possession which bears upon the subject-matter of the complaint.

ARTICLE 414.

When the Commission of Enquiry has fully considered the complaint, it shall prepare a report embodying its findings on all questions of fact relevant to determining the issue between the parties and containing such recommendations as it may think proper as to the steps which should be taken to meet the complaint and the time within which they should be taken.

It shall also indicate in this report the measures, if any, of an economic character against a defaulting Government which it considers to be appropriate, and which it considers other Governments would be justified in adopting.

ARTICLE 415.

The Secretary-General of the League of Nations shall communicate the report of the Commission of Enquiry to each of the Governments concerned in the complaint, and shall cause it to be published.

Each of these Governments shall within one month inform the Secretary-General of the League of Nations whether or not it accepts the recommendations contained in the

report of the Commission- and if not, whether it proposes to refer the complaint to the Permanent Court of International Justice of the League of Nations.

ARTICLE 416.

In the event of any Member failing to take the action required by Article 405, with regard to a recommendation or draft Convention, any other Member shall be entitled to refer the matter to the Permanent Court of International Justice.

ARTICLE 417.

The decision of the Permanent Court of International Justice in regard to a complaint or matter which has been referred to it in pursuance of Article 415 or Article 416 shall be final.

ARTICLE 418.

The Permanent Court of International Justice may affirm, vary or reverse any of the findings or recommendations of the Commission of Enquiry, if any, and shall in its decision indicate the measures, if any, of an economic character which it considers to be appropriate, and which other Governments would be justified in adopting against a defaulting Government.

ARTICLE 419.

In the event of any Member failing to carry out within the time specified the recommendations, if any, contained in the report of the Commission of Enquiry, or in the decision of the Permanent Court of International Justice, as the case may be, any other Member may take against that Member the measures of an economic character indicated in the report of the Commission or in the decision of the Court as appropriate to the case.

ARTICLE 420.

The defaulting Government may at any time inform the Governing Body that it has taken the steps necessary to comply with the recommendations of the Commission of Enquiry or with those in the decision of the Permanent Court of International Justice, as the case may be, and may request it to apply to the Secretary-General of the League to constitute a Commission of Enquiry to verify its contention. In this case the provisions of Articles 412, 413, 414, 415, 417 and 418 shall apply, and if the report of the Commission of Enquiry or the decision of the Permanent Court of International Justice is in favour of the defaulting Government, the other Governments shall forthwith discontinue the measures of an economic character that they have taken against the defaulting Government.

CHAPTER III.

GENERAL PRESCRIPTIONS.

ARTICLE 421.

The Members engage to apply conventions which they have ratified in accordance with the provisions of this Part of the present Treaty to their colonies, protectorates and possessions which are not fully self-governing:

Except where owing to the local conditions the convention is inapplicable, or

Subject to such modifications as may be necessary to adapt the convention to local conditions.

And each of the Members shall notify to the International Labour Office the action taken in respect of each of its colonies, protectorates and possessions which are not fully self-governing.

ARTICLE 422.

Amendments to this Part of the present Treaty which are adopted by the Conference by a majority of two-thirds of the votes cast by the Delegates present shall take effect when ratified by the States whose representatives compose the Council of the League of Nations and by three-fourths of the Members.

ARTICLE 423.

Any question or dispute relating to the interpretation of this Part of the present Treaty or of any subsequent convention concluded by the Members in pursuance of the provisions of this Part of the present Treaty shall be referred for decision to the Permanent Court of International Justice.

CHAPTER IV.

TRANSITORY PROVISIONS.

ARTICLE 424.

The first meeting of the Conference shall take place in October, 1919. The place and agenda for this meeting shall be as specified in the Annex hereto.

Arrangements for the convening and the organisation of the first meeting of the Conference will be made by the Government designated for the purpose in the said Annex. That Government shall be assisted in the preparation of the documents for submission to the Conference by an International Committee constituted as provided in the said Annex.

The expenses of the first meeting and of all subsequent meetings held before the League of Nations has been able to establish a general fund, other than the expenses of Delegates and their advisers, will be borne by the Members in accordance with the apportionment of the expenses of the International Bureau of the Universal Postal Union.

ARTICLE 425.

Until the League of Nations has been constituted all communications which under the provisions of the foregoing Articles should be addressed to the Secretary-General of the League will be preserved by the Director of the International Labour Office, who will transmit them to the Secretary-General of the League.

ARTICLE 426.

Pending the creation of a Permanent Court of International Justice disputes which in accordance with this Part of the present Treaty would be submitted to it for decision will be referred to a tribunal of three persons appointed by the Council of the League of Nations.

ANNEX.

FIRST MEETING OF ANNUAL LABOUR CONFERENCE, 1919.

The place of meeting will be Washington.

The Government of the United States of America is requested to convene the Conference.

The International Organising Committee will consist of seven Members, appointed by the United States of America, Great Britain, France, Italy, Japan, Belgium and Switzerland. The Committee may, if it thinks necessary, invite other Members to appoint representatives.

Agenda:

Application of principle of the 8-hours day or of the 48-hours week.

Question of preventing or providing against unemployment.

Women's employment:

Before and after child-birth, including the question of maternity benefit;

During the night;

In unhealthy processes.

Employment of children:

Minimum age of employment;

During the night;

In unhealthy processes.

Extension and application of the International Conventions adopted at Berne in 1906 on the prohibition of night work for women employed in industry and the prohibition of the use of white phosphorus in the manufacture of matches.

SECTION II.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES.

ARTICLE 427.

The High Contracting Parties, recognising that the well-being, physical, moral and intellectual, of industrial wage-earners is of supreme international importance, have framed, in order to further this great end, the permanent machinery provided for in Section I and associated with that of the League of Nations.

They recognise that differences of climate, habits, and customs, of economic opportunity and industrial tradition, make strict uniformity in the conditions of labour difficult of immediate attainment. But, holding as they do, that labour should not be regarded merely as an article of commerce, they think that there are methods and principles for regulating labour conditions which all industrial communities should endeavour to apply, so far as their special circumstances will permit.

Among these methods and principles, the following seem to the High Contracting Parties to be of special and urgent importance:

First - The guiding principle above enunciated that labour should not be regarded merely as a commodity or article of commerce.

Second - The right of association for all lawful purposes by the employed as well as by the employers.

Third - The payment to the employed of a wage adequate to maintain a reasonable standard of life as this is understood in their time and country.

Fourth - The adoption of an eight hours day or a forty-eight hours week as the standard to be aimed at where it has not already been attained.

Fifth - The adoption of a weekly rest of at least twenty-four hours, which should include Sunday wherever practicable.

Sixth - The abolition of child labour and the imposition of such limitations on the labour of young persons as shall permit the continuation of their education and assure their proper physical development.

Seventh - The principle that men and women should receive equal remuneration for work of equal value.

Eighth - The standard set by law in each country with respect to the conditions of labour should have due regard to the equitable economic treatment of all workers lawfully resident therein.

Ninth - Each State should make provision for a system of inspection in which women should take part, in order to ensure the enforcement of the laws and regulations for the protection of the employed.

Without claiming that these methods and principles are either complete or final, the High Contracting Parties are of opinion that they are well fitted to guide the policy of the League of Nations; and that, if adopted by the industrial communities who are members of the League, and safeguarded in practice by an adequate system of such inspection, they will confer lasting benefits upon the wage-earners of the world.¹⁵

¹⁵ Source: The Avalon Project at Yale Law School, < <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/imt/partxiii.asp> > accessed 2.9.16

Appendix 4: an abridged evolution of the Labour Charter – the nineteen points and the Balfour redraft

The Labour Charter's partial evolution is included here because, although the original nineteen points were reproduced in volume one of *Origins of the International Labor Office* (pp. 186-8), and documents relating to these were reproduced in its volume two (document 43), both volumes of the book are not always easy to find. They are interesting for noting how suggestions from the differing delegations in regard to their national requirements could not be included in the final nine, as Barnes argued, owing their 'too special' nature and left for the annual Labour Conference to determine instead. Some of the proposals the women's delegation presented the Labour Commission with were treated similarly. It is also interesting to note point thirteen's American spelling of 'labor'. The Borden redraft discussed in chapter six bore close resemblance to the final Labour Charter which comprises Article 427 of Chapter XIII (previous appendix).

A. The original nineteen points, or clauses, of the Labour Charter as they were distilled by the March 13 sub-Labour Commission sub-committee from the French, American, Belgian and Italian delegations' submissions:

The High Contracting Parties declare their acceptance of the following principles and engage to take all necessary steps to secure their realisation in accordance with the recommendations to be made by the International Labour Conference established under this Treaty as to their practical application: -

1. The principle of the limitation of the hours of work in industry (or commerce) on the basis of eight hours a day or forty-eight hours a week, subject to an exception for countries in which, owing to climatic conditions, the imperfect development of industrial organisation or other special circumstances, the industrial efficiency of the workers is substantially different from the efficiency of the workers in other countries.
For such countries a basis shall be adopted which shall be recommended by the International Labour Conference as approximately equivalent to the said basis of eight hours a day or forty-eight hours a week.
2. The principle that no child should be permitted to be employed below the age of fourteen years in order that every child may be ensured a minimum amount of education necessary.
The principle that between the years of fourteen and eighteen young persons of either sex may only be employed on condition that their technical or general education is continued.
3. The principle that employers and workers should be allowed the right of association and combination for all purposes, subject only to such restrictions as are essential for safeguarding the national interests.

4. The principle that every worker has a right to a wage sufficient to maintain a reasonable standard of life, having regard to the circumstances of time and place. Alternative: The principle that a reasonable wage should be paid for all work performed, based on a standard of life corresponding to the degree of civilisation attained at the period in question.
5. The principle of the weekly rest or its equivalent for all workers, which should include Sunday wherever possible.
6. The principle that in all matters concerning the rights of workpeople, working conditions and social insurance, foreign workmen and their families should be treated on the same footing as the nationals of the country in which they reside, and that they may not be subjected as such to any special taxation.
7. The principle that equal pay should be given to women and to men for equal work.
8. The principle that maximum weekly hours of work should be fixed by the national legislation of each of the High Contracting Parties for wage earners in agriculture.
9. The principle that the various States should establish a system of inspection of working conditions in industry, commerce and agriculture, with which representatives of the workers should be associated.
10. The principle of freedom of migration subject to the consent of the Governments and trade unions of the countries directly involved.
11. The principle that the provisions of the various States concerning health and safety as well as those concerning social insurance should be compared, with a view to standardising as far as possible the different national regulations on the basis most conducive to securing the health and safety of the workers.
12. The principle that it is incumbent on the Government of every State to take all possible measures to prevent unemployment, and to ensure provisions for the unemployed worker during any period of involuntary employment.
13. The principle that in right and in fact the labor of a human being can not be treated as merchandise of an article of commerce.
14. The principle that no condition of involuntary servitude may exist except in punishment of a crime of which the person concerned has been duly proved guilty.
15. The principle that seamen of the mercantile marine should have the right of leaving their ships while they are in port.
16. The principle that no article or commodity may be carried out or delivered in international commerce if prison labour contributed to its manufacture.
17. The principle that the sale or use for commercial purposes of all articles of produced by home work should be prohibited.
18. The principle that any State shall have the right to send special officials to assist in any way and to protect its own emigrant workpeople, and that any State to which they have migrated shall be obliged to admit such officials and to assist them in the performance of their duties.

19. The principle that reciprocity of action should be established between voluntary organisations recognised by their Governments for the purpose of the assistance and protection of workpeople.

B. The Balfour re-draft of April 16: One can see why the Japanese delegation may have favoured this version.

The High Contracting Parties, recognising that the physical, moral and intellectual well-being of industrial wage earners is of supreme international importance, have framed a permanent machinery associated with that of the League of Nations to further this great end.

They recognise that difference of climate and race of economic opportunity and industrial traditions make strict uniformity in the conditions of labour difficult of immediate attainment. But, holding as they do, that labour should not be regarded merely as an article of commerce, they think that there are methods and principles for regulating labour conditions which all industrial communities should endeavour to apply so far as their special circumstances will permit.

Among these methods and principles, the following seems to the High Contracting Parties to be of special importance: -

The right of association for all lawful purposes by the employed, as well as by the employers:

The payment to the employed of a wage adequate to maintain a reasonable standard of life, as this is understood in their time and country:

The adoption, as the standard to be aimed at, of a forty-eight hours week with one day holiday:

The abolition of child labour, and the imposition of such limitations on the labour of young persons as shall permit the continuation of their education, and secure their physical development:

The adoption in each country of such regulations as will prevent the evils consequent on different rates of remuneration being habitually given in the same district for the same work, to different categories of the employed; whether those categories consist respectively of men and women or of foreigners or native-born.

Without claiming that these methods and principles are either complete or final, the High Contracting Parties are of the opinion that they are well fitted to guide the policy of the League of Nations; and that, if adopted by the industrial communities who are members of the League, and safeguarded in practice by an adequate staff of (male and female) inspectors they will confer incalculable benefits upon the wage earners of the world.

Appendix 5: Article 312 of the Treaty of Versailles

SECTION VIII. SOCIAL AND STATE INSURANCE IN CEDED TERRITORY (ARTICLE 312)

Without prejudice to the provisions contained in other Articles of the present Treaty, the German Government undertakes to transfer to any Power to which German territory in Europe is ceded, and to any Power administering former German territory as a mandatory under Article 22 of Part I (League of Nations), such portion of the reserves accumulated by the Government of the German Empire or of German States, or by public or private organisations under their control, as is attributable to the carrying on of Social or State Insurance in such territory.

The Powers to which these funds are transferred must apply them to the performance of the obligations arising from such insurances

The conditions of the transfer will be determined by special conventions to be concluded between the German Government and the Governments concerned.

In case these special conventions are not concluded in accordance with the above paragraph within three months after the coming into force of the present Treaty, the conditions of transfer shall in each case be referred to a Commission of five members one of whom shall be appointed by the German Government, one by the other interested Government and three by the Governing Body of the International Labour Office from the nationals of other States. This Commission shall by majority vote, within three months after appointment adopt recommendations for submission to the Council of the League of Nations, and the decisions of the Council shall forthwith be accepted as final by Germany.¹⁶

¹⁶ Source: The Avalon Project, Yale Law School, <<http://avalon.law.yale.edu/imt/partx.asp>> accessed 2.9.16

Appendix 6: The evolution of Article XXXV of the Labour Convention

A. Article XXXIV (as it was known during the second reading) as drafted: -

The British Dominions and India shall have the same rights and obligations under this Convention *as if they were* separate High Contracting Parties.

The same shall apply to any colony or possession of any of the High Contracting Parties which on the application of such High Contracting Party is recognised as fully self-governing by the Executive Council of the League of Nations.

The High Contracting Parties engage to apply conventions which they have ratified in accordance with the provisions of the present Convention to their colonies, protectorates and possessions, which are not fully self-governing:

1. Except when owing to the local conditions the convention is inapplicable, or
2. Subject to such modifications as may be necessary to adapt the convention to local conditions.

And each of the High Contracting Parties shall notify to the International Labour Office the action taken in respect of each of its colonies, protectorates and possessions which are not fully self-governing.¹⁷

- The text ‘as if they were’ was problematic for the self-governing Dominions.¹⁸

B. After the BED meeting of April 9, Article XXXV’s first paragraph was to be deleted, and the second amended to read:

‘Any colony or possession of any of the High Contracting Parties which in the application of such High Contracting Party is recognised as fully self-governing by the Executive Council of the League of Nations shall have the same rights and obligations under this Convention as if it were a separate High Contracting Party.’¹⁹

C. As discussed, the Labour Report circulated during the April 11 plenary had not made the correction. Borden’s amendment followed:

‘The Conference authorises the Drafting Committee to make such amendments as may be necessary to have the Convention conform to the Covenant of the League of Nations in the character of its membership and in the method of adherence.’²⁰

D. Second paragraph of Article I of the Covenant of the League of Nations:

‘Any fully self-governing State, Dominion or Colony not named in the Annex may become a Member of the League if its admission is agreed to by two-thirds of the Assembly, provided that it shall give effective guarantees of its sincere intention to

¹⁷ TNA FO 608/238/367, *Report of the Commission on International Labour Legislation* (p. 29), 24.3.19

¹⁸ *Origins*, vol 1, pp.171-2

¹⁹ TNA FO 608/238/437 (appendix) 9.4.19;

²⁰ *Origins*, vol II, pp. 408-9 (doc. 50)

observe its international obligations, and shall accept such regulations as may be prescribed by the League in regard to its military, naval and air forces and armaments.’

E. Article 421 of the Labour Chapter (XXIII) Peace Treaty:

‘The Members engage to apply conventions which they have ratified in accordance with the provisions of this Part of the present Treaty to their colonies, protectorates and possessions which are not fully self-governing:

1. Except where owing to the local conditions the convention is inapplicable, or
2. Subject to such modifications as may be necessary to adapt the convention to local conditions.

And each of the Members shall notify to the International Labour Office the action taken in respect of each of its colonies, protectorates and possessions which are not fully self-governing.’²¹

²¹‘The Versailles Treaty June 28, 1919 : Part XIII’, available from the Avalon Project, Yale Law School @ <<http://avalon.law.yale.edu/imt/partxiii.asp>> accessed 7.3.2017

Appendix 7: biographical notes

Willie Adamson (1863-1936)

Labour politician (non-socialist) and trade unionist, Fife and Kinross Miners' Association General Secretary from 1908; in December 1910 he became the first Scottish miners' Labour MP; chair of the PLP 1917-21, was replaced by Clynes.

W. A. (William) Appleton (1859-1940)

General secretary of the Amalgamated Society of Operative Lace Makers 1896, served Nottingham City Council and its Trades Council through 1907; founded the International Lacemakers' Federation in 1900, with corresponding unions in Scotland and France; General Federation of Trade Unions management committee from 1903; was made a Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 1917, and founded the IFTU in 1919.

Edvard Beneš (1884-1948)

Statesman, Foreign Minister, considered founder of modern Czechoslovakia, formed its provisional Government in 1918, served as League of Nations chairman six times, negotiated the 1921 treaties with Romania and Yugoslavia (1921) that formed the Little Entente, capitulated to Hitler in 1938 to lose the Sudetenland; returned to establish a government again in 1945.

William Henry (Baron) Beveridge (1879-1963)

Social reformer and economist, civil servant served on the Board of Trade, Ministry of Munitions, and Ministry of Food; Director of the London School of Economics c. 1936; advocate for full employment. His 1942 report *Social Insurance and Allied Services* is viewed as the cornerstone of the 1945 Labour Party's winning progressive policy.

Tony Blair (1953-)

Leader of the Labour Party and Prime Minister, 1997-2007, responsible for the rebranding of the Party as 'New', champion of Giddens' 'Third Way'; led Britain into the Iraq War in 2001.

Andrew Bonar Law (1858-1923)

Conservative Party leader and PM, 1922; was Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade, 1902; opponent of Irish Home Rule, the tariff-reform advocate was Chancellor of the Exchequer in Lloyd George's Coalition Government c. 1916; oversaw negotiation with the United States over Britain's war loans as PM through his 1923 resignation owing to cancer. He only served 211 days as PM and has been referred to as 'The Unknown Prime Minister.'

Margaret Brace Bondfield (1873-1953)

Parliamentary Committee of the TUC for Women Workers, and TUC representative to the American Federation of Labour, 1918 – 1919; MP for Northampton, 1923–1924; Wallsend, 1926–1931, Minister of Labour, 1929–1931.

Charles William ('C W') Bowerman (1851-1947)

Trade unionist (printing) and Labour politician, joined the London Society of Compositors (LSC) in 1873; TUC parliamentary committee member c. 1897, co-

founding member of the 1900 LRC; London county council alderman (from 1901 to 1907) privy councillor and TUC organiser c. 1916, long-standing MP for Deptford 1906-1931; Co-operative Printing Society chairman for a number of years.

Cecile Brunschvicg (1877-1946)

Co-founder of the French Union for Women's Suffrage (*Union française pour le suffrage des femmes*) secretary-general, the USFS was founded in Paris, 1908

John Burns (1858-1943)

Prominent SDF propagandist and leader of London's unemployed; West London ASE member from 1879; Socialist candidate for West Nottingham, 1885; a significant figure in the 1889 London Dockers' strike, Burns was elected to London County Council the same year, MP for Battersea from 1892 (Battersea Liberal Association) and Lib-Lab Cabinet Minister from 1906

Thomas Burt (1837-1922)

Labour MP for Morpeth 1834-1918; Secretary, Northumberland Miners' Association, father of the HoC 1910-18; a Lib-Lab who ran on a radical Labour ticket but never joined Labour; among the first workers to enter Parliament under Gladstone

Antonio Sánchez de Bustamante (y Sirven) (1865-1951)

Cuban Labour Commission member, renowned Cuban lawyer, progressive politician, professor of Public and Private International Law, Senator to the Cuban Congress, politician, two-time Judge of the Permanent Court of International Justice at the Hague (1922–1944).

Sir Harold Beresford Butler (1883-1951)

MoL civil servant who introduced more stringent bureaucratic controls; encouraged the spread of Whitley councils and trade boards; assistant secretary to the British labour section in Paris, member of the WC Organising Committee; ILO deputy director c. 1920, succeeding Thomas as Director in 1932. Butler convinced America to join the ILO in 1934. He initiated regional labour conferences with a focus on local economic conditions; resigned in 1938 to become first warden of Nuffield College, Oxford. Head of the British information service in Washington, DC, c. 1942

(Leonard) James 'Jim' Callaghan, Baron Callaghan of Cardiff (1912-2005)

Labour Prime Minister (1976-9) Chancellor of the exchequer, 1964–7; Home secretary, 1967–70, Opposition Leader 70-74, Foreign secretary, 1974–76; did not step down from the Party leadership after losing the General Election in 1979, hanging on until 1980 when he was replaced by Michael Foot.

Barbara Ann Castle, Baroness Castle of Blackburn (1910-2002)

MP for Blackburn 1945, PPS to Sir Stafford Cripps at the Board of Trade, 1945-7; PPS to Harold Wilson 1947-51; the dedicated Bevanite held several ministerial posts in the Wilson Government, 1964–70 including Transport, first Minister for Overseas Development, fourth woman in British history to hold a Cabinet position (Margaret Bondfield being the first in 1929) Health & Social Services Secretary, 1974-6. Her 1969 white paper, 'In Place of Strife' alienated her from her colleagues on the left, and was

said to be partly responsible for Labour's 1970 GE defeat.

Edgar Algernon Robert Gascoyne-Cecil, 1st Viscount Cecil of Chelwood, CH, PC, QC (1864-1958), known as Lord Robert Cecil from 1868 to 1923 British Foreign Office legal adviser c. 1918, served on the Phillimore committee which drafted the early draft of the covenant of the League of Nations; integral towards the drafting of the Peace Treaty, the Permanent Court of International Justice was a Hurst proposal.

(Joseph) Austen Chamberlain (1863-1937)

Son of Joseph and half-brother of Neville, became Secretary of State for India under Asquith but lingered, 1915-7, Minister without Portfolio, 1918; Chancellor of the Exchequer c. 1919; Leader of the Conservatives in the Commons in 1921–22, resigned when the Carlton Club rebellion ended the Coalition.

Georges Clemenceau (1841-1929)

French Prime Minister, 1906-9 and 1917-20; former leader of the Radical Party who was integral to the French Third Republic, one of the principal architects of the Treaty of Versailles, established the highly criticised reparations committee responsible for German territorial and financial reparations.

John Robert Clynes (1869-1949)

ILP and LRC co-founder, the (first English) Labour MP, first for Manchester Northeast, 1906; then Manchester Platting, 1918; Lancashire Gasworkers' Union and Labour Party leader during its parliamentary breakthrough at the 1922 general election; Parliamentary Secretary of the Ministry of Food Control, 1917; Minister of Food Control, 1918; Home Secretary during MacDonald's 1929-31 Government.

George Nathaniel Curzon, Marquess Curzon of Kedleston (1859-1925)

Conservative-Unionist member of the Cabinet, Viceroy of India, 1899-1905, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1919-24; he of the 'Curzon Line' which became the Poland-Soviet Union border; stayed in London while Balfour went to Paris with Lloyd George.

Sir Malcolm Delevingne (1868-1950)

Civil servant, never left the Home Office, British government delegate to Bern (1906 and 1913) largely responsible for the bans on white phosphorus in match-making, and on night work for women. Participated in Washington (1919) and Geneva (1923, 1928, and 1929) Labour Conferences; did a great deal to improve health and safety in the British factory system; remained active after retirement in industrial welfare, serving on the royal commission on safety in coal mines, 1936 and chaired the Safety in Mines Research Board, 1939-7, et al.

Constance Drexel (1894-1956)

Reported from the front as a Red Cross nurse c. 1915, She returned to report on the Paris Peace Conference and the International Conference of Women and International Woman Suffrage Alliance; one of Capitol Hill's few women political correspondents; was later shamed for a perceived interest in Nazi Germany and pretending to be an heiress.

Edo (Eduard Carl) Fimmen (1881-1942)

Dutch multi-linguist trade unionist and editor who became involved in the Christian Anarchist magazine *Vrede* (Peace) c. 1901; moved away from anarchism to joined the National Union of Commercial and Office Employees, 1903; a founder and treasurer of the General Confederation of Netherlands Trade and Office Employees, becoming Secretary, 1907-16 from 1907 – 1916; General Secretary of the International Transport Workers' Federation, 1919-42.

Arthur Fontaine (1860-1931)

French engineer, Assistant Secretary to the Labour Commission; entered the French Ministry for Labour in 1891, and was Director, 1899-1920; co-founder of the International Association for Labor Legislation in 1900; Berne Conference delegate 1906 and 1913; after the Peace he was appointed the first President of the ILO Governing Body, a role he held until death.

Andrew Furuseth (1854-1938)

Norwegian-born Furuseth organised the Sailor's Union of the Pacific, 1880; leader of The International Seamen's Union (ISU) 1908-38; noteworthy for bringing about the Seamen's Act of 1915, the 'Magna Carta of the American Seamen'. Led the ISU strike to victory in 1919, resulting in record high peace-time wages but after the WW1 shipping boom ended, 1921's failed two-month strike saw seamen's wages cut by 25%.

Hugh Gaitskell (1906-1963)

Leader of the Labour Party, 1955-63, economics lecturer and wartime civil servant; Minister of Fuel and Power, 1946-7 then Chancellor of the Exchequer. Led the Labour Party to defeat in 1959 after trying to revoke Clause IV of the Party Constitution. The polarising, centrist Gaitskell died suddenly in 1963 when it seemed he might have been able to lead Labour back into power. (Gaitskell's grave in Hampstead, north London, is very near to this author's former home)

Henry George (1839-1897)

American political economist, journalist, author and progressive very popular with British and Irish socialists during the 19th century; his theory of 'Georgism' espoused that the economic value of land belonged to the entire community; his 'land value tax' proposed to eliminate social problems.

David Lloyd George, 1st Earl Lloyd-George of Dwyfor, OM, PC (1863-1945)

Liberal PM 1916-22, as Chancellor of the Exchequer 1908-15 his reforms ushered in the modern welfare state; major force within the 'big four' during the 1919 Peace Conference which redrew Europe's borders; after series of domestic and foreign relations crises, the 1922 Carlton Club rebellion led the Conservatives to leave the coalition and force his resignation; returned to lead the Liberal Party later that decade but he never returned to the stature he held in 1919 and he became increasingly irrelevant by the mid-1930s.

William Gillies (1884-1958)

Scottish Fabian / socialist; joined Labour's research division in 1912 (a role that made him exempt from war service), eventually becoming its Secretary; acted as Henderson's

liaison; was instrumental in re-convening the Second International which collapsed during the war; imperial advisory committee member ; head of Labour's international dept. from 1922, serving the Party and the TUC through 1925; was a regular British delegate to the Labour and Socialist International moved to Switzerland in 1925, he was a regular (and sometimes sole) British delegate to attend its conferences.

Samuel Gompers (1850-1924)

American Federation of Labor (AFL) originator; see thesis introduction.

(Viscount) Edward Grey of Fallodon (1862-1933)

Liberal statesman and adherent of 'New Liberalism'; foreign secretary, 1906-16; US Ambassador, 1919-20; Leader of the Liberal Party in the House of Lords, 1923-4.

Sir Arthur Sackville Trevor (A.S.T.) Griffith-Boscawen (1865-1946)

Conservative; Parliamentary Secretary at the Ministry of Pensions (with Barnes) 1916; Parliamentary Under Secretary of the Board of Agriculture, 1918-21; Privy Council, 1920; Minister of Agriculture, 1921; when Lloyd George's government fell in 1922 he was one of the few Cabinet members to remain; then became Minister of Health under Bonar Law. Ran unsuccessfully in a number of Parliamentary elections during his career.

(Sir) Maurice Pascal Alers Hankey (1877-1963)

A most effective aide to Lloyd George during the war as first Cabinet Secretary; a post he held for nineteen years. Became Clerk of the Privy Council, 1923; was British Secretary to numerous international conferences and Secretary-General to many Imperial Conferences; instituted instrumental changes to how the civil service operated by introducing the cabinet secretariat and re-determining the way cabinet minutes, conclusions and memoranda were circulated, credited with making the civil service a more efficient organisation. Provided counsel on domestic and foreign affairs, as well as administrative support, to five premiers. Retired in 1938.

(James) Keir Hardie (1856-1915)

Scottish socialist, politician, and trade unionist; cofounder of the ILP and Labour Party, first Leader of the Labour Party and the first Labour MP, elected to West Ham, 1892. The temperance campaigner and lay preacher supported votes for women, self-rule for India and home-rule for Scotland et al., began organising a pacifist strike as the war began but soon passed away.

Arthur Henderson, PC (1863-1935)

The first Labour cabinet minister, served in Lloyd George's 1916-7 administration; Labour Party leader three times; President of the Iron Founders' c. 1910; the Wesleyan Methodist started out as Lib-Lab and replaced Hardie as PLP chairman, 1908; Party treasurer from 1912 who played a role in MacDonald's succession as its leader; chairman of the National Advisory Committee and munitions of war committee, 1915; central author of 1918's *Labour and the New Social Order*; Foreign Secretary c. 1929; won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1934, et al.

G M Hodgson (n/a)

Unfortunately little information available about Barnes' trusted Parliamentary Private Secretary.

Edward Mandell 'Colonel' House (1858-1938)

American peace delegation. A powerful American diplomat, politician, and advisor to President Woodrow Wilson on European affairs. The President's most trusted adviser was called 'Colonel' as a show of respect but had no military experience; in March 1919 he and Wilson parted ways after the President felt he had been 'deceived' by bad information House and others supplied during the Peace Conference.

Sir Cecil James Barrington Hurst (1870-1963)

British lawyer, advisor to the League of Nations Council during the peace conference; June 1902 began in the Foreign Office 1902, and became its Principal Legal Adviser, 1918. Hurst was a delegate at the 1907 Hague Convention; became a member of the Permanent Court of International Justice, 1929, remaining a member through its dissolution, 1945.

Henry 'Max' Mayers Hyndman (1842-1941)

Well-educated, financially comfortable British socialist leader and author; his *The Text-Book of Democracy: England for All* (1881) summarised *Das Kapital* but neglected mentioning Marx, leading to a permanent rift between the two.

Leon Jouhaux (1879-1954)

French Trade Unionist and IFTU member; joined the CGT in 1906, became secretary-general, 1909-47; organised mass protests against start of WWII but was eventually imprisoned at Buchenwald; left the CGT after the war to form the social-democrat Workers' Force (CGT-FO); Nobel Prize recipient, 1951; substitute for Colliard and Fontaine on the Commission.

George Lansbury (1859-1940)

Editor, *Daily Herald* c. 1919; not an MP since 1912 (ex-Bow and Bromley) held virtually every local public office since 1893; went to prison in 1921 over the Poplar 'rates revolt'; published *Lansbury's Labour Weekly*, 1925-7; the staunchly anti-imperialist, left wing Christian Socialist Lansbury led the Labour Party, 1931-5; Taylor called him 'the most lovable figure in modern politics' (A. J. P. Taylor, *English History, 1914-1945*, 1965, p.14)

Robert Lansing (1864-1928)

US Secretary of State, 1915-20; the influential Lansing is credited with vastly overhauling US Foreign Policy; established the Diplomatic Security Service to observe Central Power activities in America; was a lead negotiator during the Peace Talks; resigned in 1920 over disagreements with the ailing Wilson regarding the League of Nations

Maxim Litvinov (1876-1951)

Soviet plenipotentiary representative in Great Britain; appointed John Maclean Bolshevik Consul for Scotland, 1918; arrested that year for addressing anti-British

public gatherings opposing intervention in the Russian Civil War; became USSR's American Ambassador, 1941.

Margaret Caroline Llewelyn-Davies (1861-1944)

British social worker, Hon. Secretary of the Women's Co-operative Guild (would not accept a salary); c. 1915 supported the International Women's Congress to the Hague; General Council of the UDC.

Louis Louchet (1872-1931)

French industrialist and politician in the Third Republic, went from conservative Republican Federation to Democratic Republican Alliance and of the Independent Radicals; became Minister of Armaments, 1917-18, replacing Albert Thomas; Minister of Industrial Re-construction, 1918-20; Clemenceau's principal economic advisor at the Peace Conference.

Mary Reid Macarthur (1880-1921)

British suffragist and strike organiser; first woman on the Scottish district council, executive on the Anti-sweating League, founded the National Federation of Women Workers (NFWW) editor of *Woman Worker*, and ILP National Council member et al., ran unsuccessfully for Parliament in 1918 and died only aged 40.

(James) Ramsay MacDonald (1866-1937)

First Labour Prime Minister, served twice 1924 (as PM and Foreign Secretary) and 1929-35 (from 1931 as head of a coalition Government); ILP chairman, 1906-9; middle-class Scot credited with developing the Party ideology and published many works on socialism and parliamentary democracy; left the Leadership 1914-22 in protest of the war and helped form the Union of Democratic Control (UDC), arguing for a negotiated peace; played a leading role during the Geneva conferences of the early 1930s; his first brief administration was brought down during 1924's 'red scare' and his second (after the economic depression prompted a massive Treasury loan) in failing health after being coerced to form a coalition government by King George V among others.

John Maclean (1879-1923)

Scottish revolutionary socialist and schoolteacher of the Red Clydeside; arrested under the Defence of the Realm Act in 1915 for organising anti-war protests; prominent in the Clyde rent strike, 1915; arrested in 1916 during an anti-militant sweep along with Jimmy Maxton and other Clydesiders; arrested for sedition in 1918; although appointed Bolshevik representative in Scotland, he disagreed with the Communist Party of Great Britain despite their absorption of the British Socialist Party; hunger-strikes and forced-feeding in prison permanently affected his health, he collapsed during a speech and died of pneumonia aged only forty-four.

Thomas James Macnamara (1861-1931)

Educator and Liberal MP for Camberwell North, 1900-18; then Camberwell North West until 1924; served under Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, then Parliamentary and Financial Secretary to the Admiralty, 1908-20; sworn of the Privy Council in 1911; a close Lloyd George associate, he was given a cabinet position and appointed him Minister of Labour, 1920-22; published a number of socio-political and educational

treatises, 1896-1926.

Ernest Aimé Joseph Mahaim (1865-1938)

Professor at the University of Liège, taught law at the University of Paris from 1912, became Belgium's Minister of Industry, Labor and Food in 1921; ILO President, 1931.

Thomas Mann (1856-1941)

ASE member c. 1881, left his career as a turner to become full-time SDF propagandist, 1887, Lancashire/Tyne locals. Also prominent during 1889 strike, became Dockers' Union President as a result.

William 'Bill' Ferguson Massey (1856-1925)

Conservative Prime minister of New Zealand, 1912-35; the most 'Imperial' of the Dominion leaders who denounced socialism and nationalisation of land; championed NZ's autonomy and had little faith in the League of Nations; founded the conservative Reform Party in 1909; New Zealand's second-longest serving PM.

James 'Jimmy' Maxton (1885-1946)

Scottish far-left politician, propagandist, orator, conscientious objector and prominent ILP leader from Red Clydeside; influenced into socialism through John MacLean and Philip Snowden; involved in strikes in the shipyards as part of the Clyde Workers' Committee; charged with sedition in 1916 and imprisoned for a year; elected to the National Council of the Labour Party, 1918; he was responsible (with MacDonald) for the motion to leave the Coalition to run independently in 1918; President of The Scottish Home Rule Association; MP for Glasgow Bridgeton, 1922 but his parliamentary privileges were temporarily revoked for his outbursts; chairman of the ILP, 1926-31; and 1934-9; published biography of V. I. Lenin in 1932, the same year he successfully moved to disaffiliate the ILP from the Labour Party, seen by some as a necessary step back from MacDonald's 'gradualism' and a tragic mistake by others.

J S ('Jim') Middleton (1878-1962)

Assistant then General Secretary of the Labour Party, 1902-31; 1935-44. Journalist and political organiser; began political life as a member of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavour and ILP; held prominent roles with the Workington Trades Council and the local Labour Representation Committee; first Assistant Secretary of the Labour Party, 1902; a close associate of Ramsay MacDonald; opposed the war and founded the Emergency Workers' National Committee. Left the Labour Party in 1931 when MacDonald formed the National Labour Organisation and the coalition government; succeeded Arthur Henderson as General Secretary of the party from 1935.

William Morris (1834-1896)

Textile designer, poet, novelist, translator, and visionary socialist/activist; came under police surveillance as a prominent public figure during a phase of great political protest c.1886-7; travelled extensively, preaching to the working men's clubs; his literary works were integral to the early British socialist movement in Britain and the utopian *News from Nowhere* (1893) was cited by many in the early Labour Party as an inspiration.

(Baron) Philip John Noel-Baker (1889-1982)

Robert Cecil's secretary, served the LON secretariat through 1922, secretary to the British delegation to the League of Nations 1923-4; professor of international relations, University of London, 1924-9; Labour MP for Coventry, 1929, became Arthur Henderson's PPS when he was foreign secretary in the second Labour government; served under Ernest Bevin at the Foreign Office c. 1945.

Vittorio Emanuele Orlando (1860-1952)

Liberal Italian PM, 1903-1919, one of the 'big four' at Versailles, resigned in June after failing to secure Italian interests at the Peace Conference; his inability to Fiume in the peace settlement has been attributed to the 'mutilated victory' inspiring in part the rise of Benito Mussolini.

William George Arthur Ormsby-Gore, fourth Baron Harlech (1885-1964)

Unionist MP for Stafford and held the title of Assistant Secretary 1917-1918; member of the British delegation to the Paris peace conference in 1919, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State 1922 – 1924, et al., not a supporter of the DLG coalition during the 1922 election.

Robert Owen (1771-1858)

Philanthropic social reformer and Welsh textile manufacturer, a founder of utopian socialism and the cooperative movement; In the early 1800s, the wealthy Owen established a system for philanthropic management to improve living and working conditions at his New Lanark mills; In 1824 he invested the bulk of his fortune in experimental socialistic communities in America; establishing communal settlements in Indiana, Ohio, New York, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee, all ending by 1827. In 1828 he became an advocate for the working classes in London; Owen promoted the growth of the trade union movement, the passage of child labour laws and the introduction of free, co-educational schools

Edward J. Phelan (1888-1967)

British civil servant of Irish descent, secretary in Paris to the British delegation's labour section and Assistant Secretary to the whole International Labour Commission; member of the Washington Conference Organising Committee, 1919; head of the ILO's Diplomatic Division c. 1920; under-secretary to Harold Butler, ILO Director, from 1932; fourth Director of the ILO 1941-1948, in 1944 had responsibility toward the *Declaration of Philadelphia*, splitting and expanding the ILO's remit into a human rights and social policy direction, and an international economic planning direction.

Carol Reigelman (Lubin) (1909-2005)

Lubin wrote her Smith College thesis on the ILO; she continued her studies at Columbia University, 1930-3, earning an MA in international relations and was employed as researcher, editorial assistant, and secretary to James T Shotwell; in preparation for *The Origins of the International Labour Organization* she travelled extensively in Europe, collecting letters, reports, and other documents; Lubin wrote Chapter III of Volume I and provided Volume II's notes; was hired by the ILO, 1935, appointed to assist the ILO's first American assistant, then General, director, John G. Winant; Lubin also completed a PhD in public law and administration at Columbia, 1950; worked temporarily at the ILO's Liaison Office with the United Nations; consulted with UN staff developing the

ILO Migration Program, and was an ILO delegate to the UN, 1951-2.

Henry M. Robinson (n/a)

California Banker, Shipping Board member; replaced

A N Hurley on the labour commission after the first sitting (little information available)

David James Shackleton (1863-1938)

Third Labour Member of Parliament, General Secretary of the Textile Factory Workers Association and chairman of the Trades Union Congress, 1906-09; Vice-chairman of the Labour Party, 1906-8; MP for Clitheroe, 1902-10; left Parliament to become a senior civil servant at Churchill's invitation; Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Labour, 1917; viewed as the first working-class man to take such a senior position. Knighted in 1917, he was chief labour adviser to the reorganized Ministry of Labour, 1920-25, even being called upon for advice after his 1925 retirement.

Robert Shirkie (1869- ?)

TUC PLP, 1919; Secretary of National Federation of Colliery Enginemen and Boilermen; received an OBE in 1935.

James T. Shotwell (1874-1965)

Canadian-born member of the American delegation to the Peace Conference, served on 'The Inquiry', President Wilson's historical materials study group; historian and director of division of Economics and History at Columbia University, NYC; Director of research, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace c. 1917; vocal advocate for children's labour protections. Published many works on peace and international relations; was influential towards the inclusion of a human rights declaration in the UN Charter.

Sir Ganga Singh, Maharaja of Bikaner (1880-1943)

Member of the Imperial War Conference, 1917, and signatory to the treaty of Versailles; often viewed as a modern reformist visionary; the only non-white member of the British Imperial War Cabinet; was ruling Maharaja of the princely Indian state of Bikaner (now Rajasthan) from 1888 to 1943; appointed honorary major-general in 1917, lieutenant-general, 1930, and general, 1937; Singh was the first Indian to be given the rank of general in the British army; an honorary aide-de-camp to many successive British kings.

Lord Satyendra Prasanno Sinha (1863-1928)

Prominent lawyer and statesman in British India; Indian National Congress, 1896-19; went to England in 1914 as a member of the War Conference, representing India at the Allied Peace Conference; knighted in 1915; first Indian to be appointed as Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for India, 1919, and became the first Indian member of the House of Lords the same year. He navigated the bill through the House of Lords which became the Government of India Act (1919) which transferred legislative power from the Viceroy of India to an Indian Legislature; also a member of the Imperial Privy Council; retired in 1921 owing to ill health.

Robert Smillie (1857-1940)

Irish coal-miner, trade unionist and socialist politician; founder member of the Scottish

Labour Party, 1888, and of the ILP in 1893. A close associate of Keir Hardie who declined to stand for Parliament, opting to remain with his work for the miners; VP of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain (MFGB), 1909-12; helped to establish the 'triple alliance' of miners, railway workers, and transport workers before WWI, become its chairman in 1915 after its constitution was approved. The anti-war Smillie was the president of the National Council Against Conscription, 1915, and presided over the 1917 Leeds Convention of June 1917; served on the War Emergency Workers' National Committee, acting chair from 1915-8; Smillie declined the post of food controller in 1916. Achieved peak notoriety during the post-war miners' struggle and nationalization of the mines; resigned MFGB leadership, 1921; became president of the Scottish Miners' Federation, 1922-8, and became Labour MP for Morpeth, 1923-9, despite ill health. Also declined a post with the 1924 Labour Government

Jan Christiaan Smuts (1870-1950)

Prime minister of South Africa, 1919 -24 and 1939-48; he went from being a segregationist to an apartheid oppositionist; Imperial War Cabinet, 1917 -19 and instrumental in the formation of the Royal Air Force (RAF). Smuts was the only the only man to sign both of the peace treaties ending both world wars.

1st Viscount Philip Snowden, PC (1864-1937)

British socialist politician, journalist and agitator, joined the Bradford ILP branch upon its formation, and held that the ILP's form of socialism was rooted in a British radical tradition and in the moral teachings of Christ, yet he maintained many of his Liberal values. He was a fiery orator on capitalism's evils, and helped form the nascent Labour Party's financial policy, writing many pamphlets including on for a 'socialist budget' to rival that of the Liberal Party in 1909; was pro-women's suffrage and one of Labour's most prominent supporters of the non-militant movement; became MP for Colne Valley, 1922, and Labour's first chancellor of the exchequer, 1924, and again 1929-31. Snowden was expelled from the Party in 1931, and the unfortunate part he played in the fiscal disaster that befell the second Labour Government has cast a long shadow.

Francis Herbert Stead (1857-1928)

Congregationalist Minister, publisher and social reformer, champion for old-age pensions, instrumental towards bringing the plight of the impoverished and aged poor to the nation's attention.

Frances (Lloyd George) Stevenson, Countess Lloyd-George of Dwyfor (1888-1972)

David Lloyd George's second wife, 'devoted mistress and confidential secretary'; she became a Commander of the Order of the British Empire, 1918, accompanying the Prime Minister to the Peace Conference as his secretary; arranged and collated his vast archive of papers for his *War Memoirs*; the two did not wed until 1943 after his wife Margaret died; Lloyd George died just two years later.

George (G.H.) Harold Stuart-Bunning (1870-1951)

British trade unionist, Federation of Postal Workers Secretary; involved in the formation of the Union of Post Office Workers and the Civil Service federation; Parliamentary Secretary of the TUC, 1919, also resigning that year; became British representative of the ILO Governing Body

Albert Thomas (1878-1932)

ILO's first Director, 1920-32; a prominent, moderate socialist; assistant editor of *L'Humanite*, the French Sociality Party newspaper; elected to the leadership of the Chamber of Deputies, 1910; in May 1915 became the first Minister of Armament for the Third Republic, a role he used to reorganise munitions production, and distance the Ministry from its relationship with the military high command. Became a labour minister in 1916; special ambassador to Petrograd in 1917; resigned over the French government's refusal to issue passports for attendees to the Stockholm international socialist conference; attended the Paris Peace Conference but not the Washington Conference where the Governing Body nominated him for the ILO Directorship.

James Henry (J.H., 'Jimmy') Thomas (1874-1949)

National Union of Railwaymen, TUC Chairman 1919-20; IFTU President, 1920-4; a target of the Left much as Barnes was, Thomas was highly averse to direct action and his withdrawal of the NUR's support for the Miners' Federation in 1921 contributed to the 'black Friday' fiasco that brought down the triple alliance.

Benjamin Tillett (1860-1943)

British socialist and politician, co-founder of the ILP who later joined the SDF, Fabian and 'new unionism' trade union leader; alderman on the London County Council, 1892-8; played a major role in founding the Dockers Union after the 1889 strike and as a strike leader in the 1911-12 dock strikes; instrumental in the creation of the National Transport Workers' Federation, 1910; he was its International and Political Secretary through 1931; held a seat on the TUC General Council through 1932; supported the war effort after initially considering a general strike in opposition; MP for Salford North, 1917-24 and 1929-31

Emile Vandervelde (1866-1938)

Belgian socialist, politician and freemason. The middle-class Vandervelde was a leading figure in the Belgian Labour Party (POB-BWP) and in international socialism; Belgian Minister of State, 1914; was concerned the extension of universal suffrage and social democracy and wrote extensively; Minister of Justice, 1918-21, he supported prison reform, trade union rights and women's rights; Minister of Foreign Affairs 1925-7, contributing to the Locarno Pact, et al.

(Martha) Beatrice Webb (nee Potter), Baroness Passfield (1858-1943)

English social reformer, diarist, author and labour historian who reportedly coined the term "collective bargaining"; was a founder of the London School of Economics and was also instrumental in forming the Fabian Society; wrote on co-operatism in the late 1800s; as member of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws and Relief of Distress 1905-09, her minority report outlined the welfare state which influenced the 1942 Beveridge Report; she and husband Sidney co-founded the New Statesman in 1913, and they became Labour Party members in late 1914; the two collaborated on many publications and policy statements, contributing to Labour and the New Social Order, 1918; became

MP for Seaham in Northumberland.

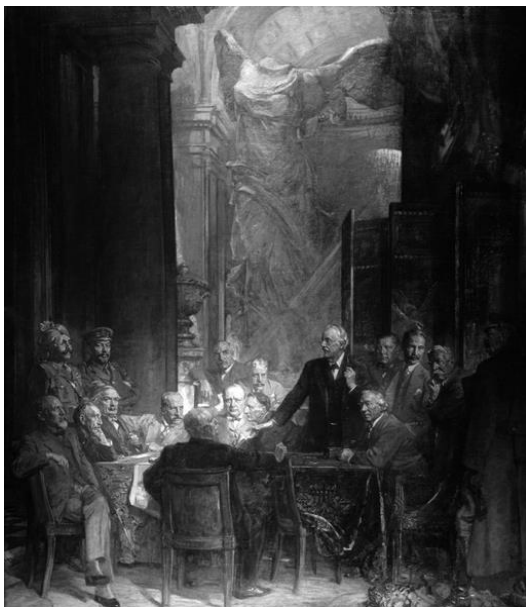
Colonel Josiah (1st Baron) Wedgwood (1872-1943)

British Liberal and Labour politician, served under Ramsay MacDonald; a follower of Henry George, he became president of the League for the Taxation of Land Values, 1908; Liberal MP for Newcastle-under-Lyme, 1906; became disillusioned with the Liberals c. 1910, and in 1913 attained prominence as a backbencher and vociferous opponent of the Government's unjust policies; travelled extensively during the war; in the 1918 General Election his (Liberal) affiliation was unclear but he distanced himself from the Coalition Government; he took the Labour whip in 1919 and joined the ILP, becoming joint Vice-Chairman of the PLP in 1921; was well-known for his criticism of German reparations and the government's partition of British territories into Palestine and Transjordan, and led a TUC-Labour Party commission to Hungary where they witnessed the brutal treatment of suspected communists; was also well-known for his support for refugees and the Indian independence movement.

Woodrow Wilson (1856-1924)

28 President of the United States, 1913-21; The United States did not declare war on Germany until April 1917; he announced the Fourteen Points - American war aims – in January 1918; in Paris he sought to build an enduring peace, but the resultant League of Nations Covenant and the Versailles Treaty failed in the Senate; already ill, he undertook a national tour to rally public support for the treaty, but this exhausted him and a near-fatal stroke ended his political activity.

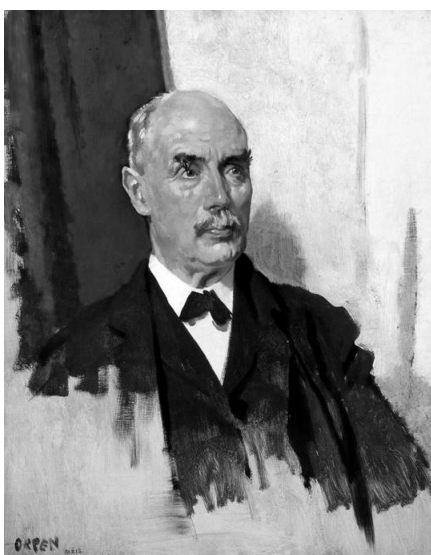
Appendix 8: thumbnails of Barnes portraits



Sir James Guthrie (1859-1930), *Statesmen of World War I* (1924-30)
National Portrait Gallery, London
Barnes is standing in the rear, left, leaning on a plinth.



John Christen Johansen (1876-1964), *Signing of the Treaty of Versailles* (1919)
National Portrait Gallery, London
Barnes is believed to be seated at the table, far left.

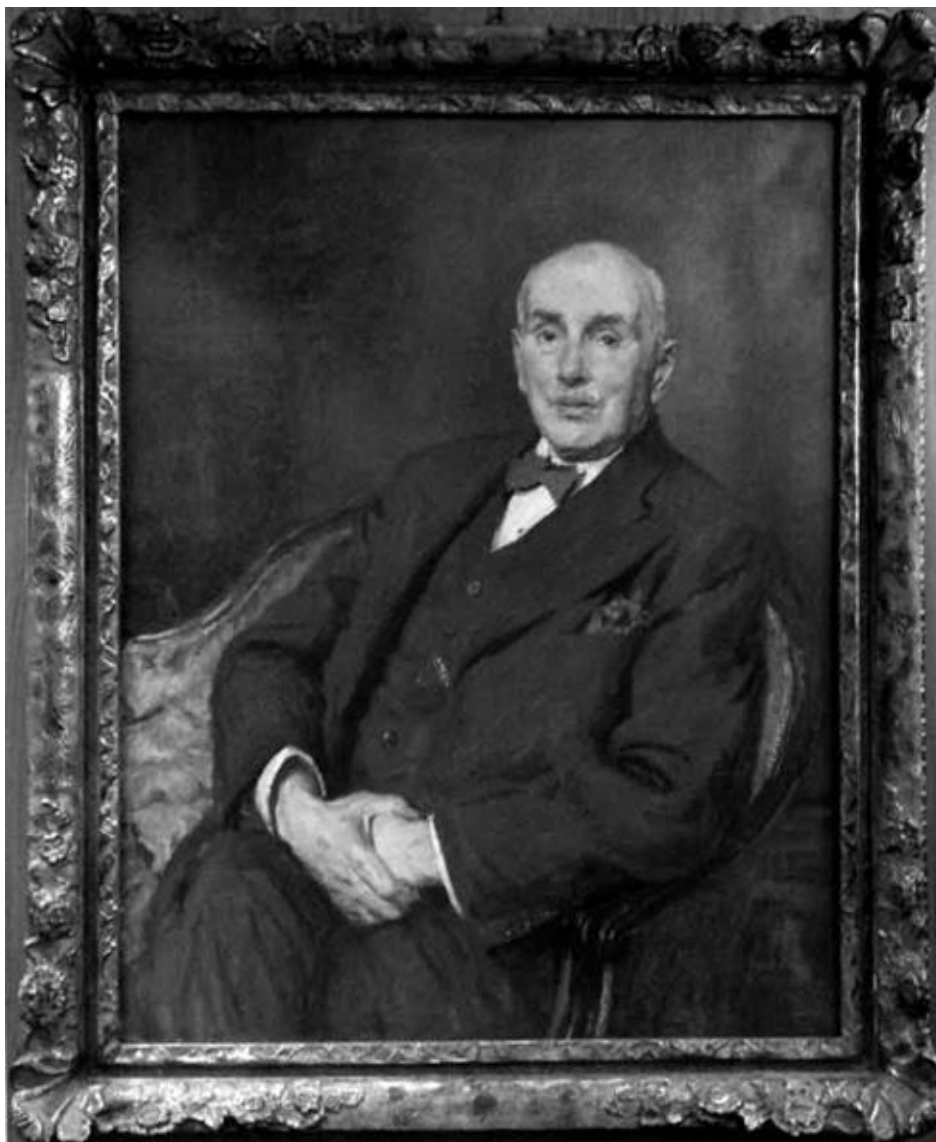


William Orpen (1878-1931)
The Right Honourable G. N. Barnes, PC (1919)
Cartwright Hall Art Gallery, Bradford, UK.



William Orpen (1878-1931)
The Signing of Peace in the Hall of Mirrors, Versailles, 28 June 1919 (1919)
Imperial War Museum, London
Barnes is seated, second from right.

**Appendix 9: the ‘forgotten’ portrait of George N. Barnes,
by Murray Urquhardt**



The Rt Hon. G. N. Barnes, oil painting by Murray Urquhart (year unknown).

Recognised during a walk-through of the ILO headquarters in Geneva, February 2016; the painting's plaque was missing and staff were unsure of its whereabouts.

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